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Rhode Island Library Association Bulletin

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May 1992

The Right to Know

BY DONNA ROBERTS

Editor's Note: The following piece is an excerpt from a speech given to the North Kingstown Rotary Club on March 3. We are sharing it with you in hopes that you may find some of the ideas useful in your own public relations efforts.

Librarianship is bound to the ideals of democracy. The very existence of libraries stands in defense of the First Amendment and in defense of equality. When library services are threatened and librarians are not valued, then the basis of our democracy is endangered. And we are at risk.

These are frightening times for librarians and for all who care about our right to know. There are tremendous obstacles we face as a society that impact on libraries and on all people. The illiteracy rate in both children and adults is shocking; new technology poses potential dangers; public information is being privatized; materials of all kinds in our nation's libraries are deteriorating rapidly; the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor is widening; physical, financial, psychological, and intellectual barriers to information access are growing; public funds for public services are declining; and attempts are being made to restrict the freedom to speak, view, and listen.

Libraries and librarians are essential. Without them, without open and equal access to information, America's right to know is at risk. What is this right to know? Everyone has the right to find out all they need to know to lead a full and productive life. Americans have the right to know, and to remember, our past; Americans have the right to know and to understand, our present; and Americans have the right to know, and to evaluate, information that can determine our future.

Benjamin Franklin's novel idea, the free public library and the distribution of books to everyone regardless of age, sex, class, or income, was a radical concept. Our library system is a national treasure, unique in the world. Librarians who work in the more than 115,000 school, public, academic, and special libraries through-

out the nation have enabled millions of Americans to learn, to achieve, to flourish, and to prosper.

Pieces of this national treasure are eroding rapidly. Protecting this system involves no less than preserving the public's right to know. The attitude of librarians in the past has been that we can sit back and assume that, because our cause is just, the value of libraries and librarians will be recognized. The reality is that the American public often does not know what we are all about. Librarians are developing a more active professional stance. We can't continue to assume the attitude of Oscar Wilde after the unsuccessful opening of one of his plays: "The play was a great success, but the audience was a failure."

Librarians have often promoted our library buildings, our collections, and our services, but we forget to tell people about our most powerful resource. The most valuable asset of any library goes home every night: the staff. It is one thing to tell people to come to a place; it is quite another to invite them to come in and consult a trained professional.

Librarians are disseminators of information, not merely its guardians. We are often considered society's gatekeepers, but we are actually the gateways: librarians can open doors and unlock the treasures that are in our collections.

Librarianship is the one profession dedicated to ensuring the right to know: the right to know information about our environment critical to our health and the future of our planet; the right to know business and economic information we need to survive in today's global marketplace; and the right to know how to participate effectively in our democracy. Libraries are one place where a child's request for information is considered as important as an adult's.

Information itself is not power. Information is simply raw material, a powerful tool. It is valuable only when processed by the human mind. Information is a catalyst, a means to create knowledge or wisdom. Librarians help people use information to solve problems. Information is like trust, or love: it becomes infinitely more valuable when shared.

The library is a critical resource, a public good essential for a humane and just society. People cannot exercise their right to know unless information is organized and available. None of us can exercise our right to know unless we are intellectually able and psychologically motivated to access and use information. The right to know is much more than freedom of speech. To truly have the right to free expression, people need more than Constitutional guarantees; they need societal commitments as well. If you have no job, no education and no money, then your voice will not carry very far. You may have the right to know, but if you're not aware of it or if you don't know how to use it, it will do you no good. Books, magazines, and databases are of little value to people who cannot read.

It has been said that we have moved into an information society. We will not live in a true information society unless, and until, we ensure that people not only have access to information, but also can understand the content. We will not live in a true information society unless, and until, people have the skills and the resources to use this content. We will not live in a true information society unless, and until, policy makers recognize that an informed citizenry is a public good that benefits us all. We will not live in a true information society, and we will not achieve equal opportunity and justice, unless and until all people have the library services they need to learn, live, work, and participate in and enjoy our democracy.

Librarians dispense tools for power. We offer services that are an essential part of the solution to problems such as illiteracy, drugs, poverty, crime, pollution, illness, and unemployment. We continue to open doors for millions of immigrants, native-born Americans, and the undereducated.

Despite our problems, libraries have never been more alive, with programs for lifelong learning, with programs for subliterate adults and their families, with new technological services for students and business people, with health information services, and with programs for latchkey children and the homeless. Librarians are designing innovative services to help people use and share information resources and services to help people exercise their right to know.

Librarians help children to explore, business people to succeed, and adults to discover. Librarians demonstrate that the business of librarians is not information. The mission of librarians is understanding through knowledge. Librarians are knowledge navigators: professionals ethically committed

to the organization and dissemination of information, knowledge, and the tools for empowerment. Librarians keep information affordable, accessible, and available. We deliver the materials and services that undergird the public's right to know.

Donna Roberts is Director of the North Kingstown Free Library.

Highlights From the Executive Board Meeting

April 14, 1992

Treasurer Judith Bell reported that the Hospital Trust account is now closed.

Donna Roberts and Marcia Trotta are publicizing libraries through letters to the editor, and radio talk show participation.

Carol Drought announced that ALA has a chapter booth table at the ALA Conference Exhibits Hall. This features chapter membership information materials and memorabilia. RILA will pay \$10.00 to defray cost of participation. Carol is seeking people to sign up for one hour slots to staff the booth. Carol sought input from the Executive Board as to how she should vote on the issue of direct election of all ALA Executive Board members. Currently of the 12 members on the board, 4 are elected directly, 8 are elected by the Council members. The RILA Executive Board felt that the current procedure was satisfactory. In anticipation of the election of RILA's new ALA Counselor, Carol has reserved a room at ALA Midwinter for that person since our election will not occur until after the reservation deadline. Carol reported that about 25,000 called in during the Call for America's Libraries campaign.

NELA Executive Board met at University of New Hampshire, Manchester on March 20, 1992. Eileen Socha announced that NELA will not be offering ALA travel in 1993. NELA is considering giving a midwinter conference for one day which may feature popular programs from the annual conference. The event would be sponsored by the sections. RILA Executive Board was not in favor of this conference. Deadline for the Emerson Greenaway Award is June 20, 1992. Eileen has application forms for this and also has NELA RED SOX DAY tickets (\$7.00) for the game at Fenway Park on June 6th. Counterparts, August 6th & 7th at Endicott College, Beverly, MA will have the theme "Advocacy and Advocates". Friends of the Libraries and Trustees will be invited. NELA slate of candidates is:

Vice President/President Elect	Carol DiPrete
	Doris Ann Sweet
Secretary	Krista McLeod
	Nancy Urtz
Director	Lee Flanagan
	Ruth Rothman

Barbara Weaver reported that Legislative Day was a success, with 5 people from Rhode Island attending.

Trustee of the Year Award: Judith will appoint a committee to work on a revised award letter this summer. *RILA Bulletin:* Wendy Knickerbocker and Frank Iacono have agreed to take on joint editorship of the Bulletin. The Executive Board agreed to split the current stipend offered to the managing editor between them. The publication is back on schedule now.

Librarian of the Year Award: Nomination period has closed. The Executive Board will take this under consideration at the next meeting.

Read Alouds: COLA-sponsored Read Alouds will continue until the end of June. The future of the program is uncertain.

Prepared for the Bulletin by Pam Stoddard from minutes taken by Deborah Mongeau, RILA Secretary.

National Library Plank

To get a library plank into the **national political party platforms** the following steps, recommended by the ALA Legislation Committee, need to be taken:

1. **National level** – Make sure that the national committee men and women of each party receive the model platform statement and send it on to the national platform committee of each party.

2. **Local and state level** – Become involved at the local level to get library issues on party planks. Attend precinct meetings or contact delegate candidates and get their commitment to support a library plank at the national conventions. Using the model platform statement, propose library resolutions that meet your local and state needs.

The 1992 Party Platform Statement on Libraries includes the following major points:

- Democracy is fueled by an informed public.
- The public has a right to know.
- Kids need libraries!
- Libraries can help solve the tragic problem of illiteracy for people of all ages.
- In an information society, we must have pathways to move information quickly to those who need it.

Dorris (Dotsie) Holmes, Chair, ALTA (American Library Trustee Association) Legislation Committee.

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Rhode Island Library Association Spring Conference

June 4-5, 1992

Salve Regina College, Newport, RI

Children's Services Programs

Thursday, June 4, 1992

9:00 – Family Literacy: reading with children

3:15 – Go Green in Your Stacks: Environmental Protection Agency (Possible source of Summer Reading Club information.)

Friday, June 5, 1992

9:30 – Jordan-Miller Storytelling Program

9:30 – Young Adult on a Shoestring

1:30 – Jordan-Miller Storytelling Program



Management Programs

Thursday, June 4, 1992

1:30 – Grass Roots Media Training

3:15 – The Americans with Disabilities Act and Libraries

Friday, June 5, 1992

9:30 – Welcome Aboard: a problem solving workshop in trustee education



Professional Issues

Thursday, June 4, 1992

9:00 – It Isn't What You're Selling, It's What They're Buying: marketing basics to promote and fund raise with your legislators

3:00 – DSLS Update

Friday, June 5, 1992

1:00 – Politics of Trusteeship



Reference and Information Services

Thursday, June 4, 1992

9:00 – Right to Know: access to government information

1:30 – Access vs. Acquisitions: serials today and tomorrow

1:30 – Research Libraries in National Parks

3:15 – Go Green in Your Stacks: Environmental Protection Agency

Friday, June 5, 1992

1:30 – Local Area Networks for CD-ROM and Beyond

Rhode Island Library Network Introduces QUAHOG

At a special media event held in the State House, Rhode Island's Governor Sundlun congratulated the Department of State Library Services for its development of a new variety of Rhode Island shellfish. This unusual way of introducing Rhode Island's new statewide database on CD-ROM was appropriately held on April Fool's Day. In elaborating on the Governor's remarks, Barbara Weaver, Department of State Library Services Director, pointed out that this new type of shellfish can be found in virtually every community in Rhode Island. During the event department staff demonstrated the first edition of QUAHOG, which stands for **QU**ick **A**ccess to **H**oldin**G**s. QUAHOG contains listings for more than 2.5 million items located at thirty-two public, one high school and ten hospital libraries, as well as the Department itself. Over seventy-five Rhode Island libraries of all types have received copies of the CD-ROM disk and the accompanying software, which can be used to identify and locate books and other materials statewide. The software and CD-ROM disks are provided at no charge to libraries by the Department, through funding under LSCA.

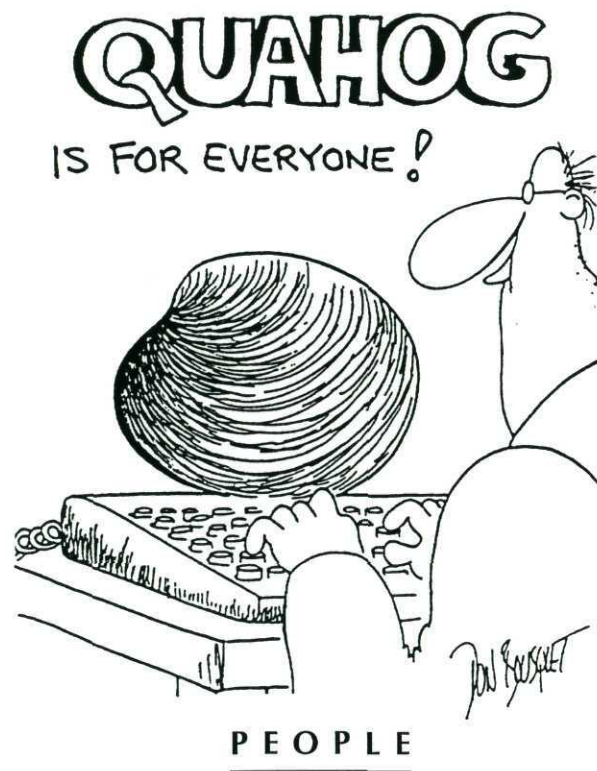
The celebration continued with a presentation to the Governor of a framed print of the project's logo, drawn by cartoonist Don Bousquet, resident Rhode Island lampooner. The logo for the project matches its very Rhode Island essence, declaring the "QUAHOG is for everyone!", and showing a typical Bousquet Rhode Islander typing at the keyboard and looking at the QUAHOG "clam-puter" screen. To commemorate the occasion, each attendee received a QUAHOG pin.

Many libraries participated in the planning and production of QUAHOG, lending both their records and their expertise. To be included in the database, each library contributed its holdings in MARC format. Paul Venancio, Director of Media Services at the Middletown High School, sent computer disks from the Alliance-Plus microcomputer-based system which he uses in the media center. Peter Bennett, Chief of Support Services at the Providence Public Library, loaded MARC and item records for the thirty-two public library members of the Cooperating Libraries Automated Network (CLAN) onto computer tapes. Health sciences librarians at the Providence Center, the Medical Center, Institute of Mental Health, and the Butler, Kent County, Miriam, Memorial, St. Joseph, and Newport hospitals made their union book list, maintained by MARCIVE, available. All of these MARC records were combined on one CD-ROM disk.

Barbara Weaver also announced the Department's plans to publish a second edition of QUAHOG for the Rhode Island Library Network in 1993. The next edition will include items from additional libraries, and will continue to increase the

variety of libraries and items included. Top priorities for the next edition will be additional school libraries and local college or university libraries.

The Department contracted with NELINET, the regional network for OCLC, for the production of the QUAHOG database. The system uses the SHAREPAC software developed under a cooperative agreement between OCLC and Auto-Graphics, and can be used as a public access catalog and for interlibrary loan. Using SHAREPAC software and the QUAHOG database, a library can search the database for a desired interlibrary loan item, and generate and store an off-line OCLC request. These stored requests are then sent to OCLC in a dial-up batch mode for processing. The software also allows a SHAREPAC user to dial-in to the online OCLC interlibrary loan system to request items not found on the CD-ROM disk.



PEOPLE

NORMAN DESMARAIS, Acquisitions Librarian at Providence College and feature editor of the *Bulletin*, wrote "Prolonging CD-ROM Life Expectancy" which was published in the Commentary section of *Nautilus* vol. 2 no. 3 (March 16, 1992) (MPC version) and in 3:4 of the Macintosh version. *Nautilus* is a monthly magazine published on CD-ROM. Norman also presented a preconference workshop on "CD-ROM Networks: Selection and Installation" at the Computers in Libraries Conference, Washington, D.C. March 4, 1992 and a paper on the "Impact of Technology on Librarians" at the same conference. He also attended the International Conference & Exposition on Multimedia and CD-ROM in San Francisco, March 10-12.

MARGARET HIRST, former Coordinator of the Northern Interrelated Library System, has been appointed Children's Librarian at the North Providence Union Free Library.

ANNE NOLAN was appointed Assistant Head, Reference Department, at Brown University effective May 11, 1992. She will be responsible for supervising the interlibrary loan units of the Sciences and Rockefeller libraries, providing collection development, reference and outreach services, and participating in the introduction and implementation of electronic technologies in the Reference Department. Before coming to Brown, Ms. Nolan was Acting Coordinator of Database Services at the University of Pittsburgh library system.

SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL received the annual Public Service Award presented by the Friends of Libraries USA on Library Legislative Day, April 7th. Senator Pell was honored for all his work on behalf of libraries throughout his distinguished career.

OKSANA PROCYK was appointed Catalog Librarian (Slavic) at Brown University effective March 2, 1992. She is responsible for cataloging material in the Slavic languages in all subject areas. Before coming to Brown, Ms. Procyk was Ukrainian Specialist at the Harvard College Library.

TOVAH REIS was appointed Medical Library Coordinator at Brown University effective August 1, 1991. She is responsible for coordinating library services to the bio-medical faculty and students of the Brown Program in Medicine. Before coming to Brown, Ms. Reis was Director of the Medical Library, Chaim Sheba Medical Center, Tel Hoshomer, Israel.

CYNTHIA ST. AMOUR, formerly Supervisor of Network Services at the Department of State Library Services, has been appointed Network Administrator of the Old Colony Library Network, a consortium of 21 public libraries in a Dynix-based system.

HOWARD BOKSENBAUM, Chief of Library Planning, Development, and Information Services at DSLS for the past two and one-half years, has been appointed Manager, Library Development Bureau at the New Jersey State Library. He will be responsible for the administration of the state network, state aid and federal grant programs, library standards, and continuing education and will oversee a \$9 million program budget.

CHARLOTTE SCHOONOVER, former Head Librarian of the Kingston Free Library in South Kingstown, has been named Director of the Nantucket (MA) Atheneum beginning June 1st.

BULLETIN BOARD

Providence College has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from The Champlin Foundations in Providence, RI and a \$40,000 grant from the George I. Alden Trust in Worcester, MA to defray the cost of adding compact shelving to the college's Phillips Memorial Library. The shelving will relieve present space constraints and accommodate future collection growth.

The Phillips Memorial Library currently houses more than 300,000 volumes and over 1,800 periodical subscriptions. It also houses the special collection of more than 500,000 personal and professional papers of former U.S. congressmen John E. Fogarty and Edward Beard, former U.S. Senator John O. Pastore, former U.S. Attorney General Howard McGrath, and numerous Rhode Island governors and other state officials.

The college also received grants for the automation of the library's collection. A grant of \$100,000 from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation of Jackson, FL will fund the college's conversion of the library's card catalogue to an automated system. This retrospective conversion will enable the library to undertake a fully integrated online system to maintain circulation and acquisition records and to provide improved access to the library's book and periodical holdings not only in the library, but eventually at remote sites throughout the campus.

The automation will enable PC to take advantage of a College Library Technology and Cooperation Grant of \$79,950 from the U.S. Department of Education to join the Higher Education Library Information Network (HELIN).

The HELIN consortium makes the collections of participating college and university libraries available to patrons of the participating institutions,

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

CLAIRE SWEET

Children's Librarian, Robert Beverly Hale and Kingston Free Libraries

LORRAINE DEMARTINI

Media Center Specialist, Tollgate High School

CATHERINE TAYLOR

Graduate student at URI GSLIS

ELIZABETH D'AMORE

Circulation Manager, North Providence Union Free Library

HELEN A. MCQUEENEY

Librarian, East Providence High School

JAMES A. BARRETT

Cataloger/Bibliographer, URI Library

MARY VAN ULLEN

Student, Pomfret Center, CT

which include the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, Roger Williams College, and the Community College of Rhode Island. The collections of these universities and colleges comprise more than 3,500,000 items (including books, publications, microforms, and government publications).

The grant will fund the purchase of equipment which will allow authorized Providence College library patrons to access the listings of the holdings of participating institutions, which are stored in a telecommunications system based at the University of Rhode Island.

More than 75,000 people called to register their support as part of the "Call for America's Libraries" campaign sponsored by the American Library Association and Friends of Libraries USA.

The Call for America's Libraries Campaign was designed to rally a show of public support in the face of a library funding crisis worse than during the Great Depression. The four-week campaign was launched on March 16 and ran through National Library Week, April 5-11.

"The tragedy is that libraries are being forced to make cuts at a time when people are most in need of them," said ALA President Patricia Glass Schuman. "One woman who called was almost in tears because she said they are dropping her bookmobile service. The school library has been cut. The nearest public library is 20 miles away. She and her children depend on the bookmobile."

One caller said he would rather give up his food stamps than his library. Another, who described himself as retired on a limited income, said he considered libraries "as essential to my intellectual health as public health services are to my physical health."

Schuman noted that libraries across the country are reporting increased use as people turn to them for information and entertainment during a recessionary economy.

She noted that public libraries receive less than 1 percent of all tax dollars and are used by 66 percent of the adult population.

The 800 number was a volunteer effort, with telephone lines donated by Telephone Express, a long distance carrier based in Colorado Springs, Colo., and staffed by some 200 "friends" of libraries.

Those who called were asked if they agreed with the following statement:

"I believe America's libraries are essential to democracy; I believe libraries play an important role in education, and that librarians provide vital services. I believe our nation's libraries should be fully funded."

"Fully funded means that libraries have the support they need to serve their communities," Schuman explained. "It means a public library is open the days and hours needed to serve its community. It means school and college students have access to the materials they need."

To keep the momentum going, ALA has begun a petition drive with the goal of adding 25,000 names to the 75,000 already gathered. The goal is to have at least 100,000 names of supporters to send to President Bush and Congress in June.

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science held a day-long forum on March 10 at the Department of Education as part of its follow-up on the recommendations of the July 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services. To help deal with the 95 WHCLIS recommendations, NCLIS decided one of its first steps would be to host a forum where representatives of national organizations and other interested parties could highlight what they consider most important from the Conference and how they plan to proceed with their priorities. The threefold purpose of the forum was to (1) gather information, (2) discover which groups have similar priorities and/or plans of action, and (3) identify potential allies in achieving priorities.

Altogether, 27 witnesses, including ALA President-elect Marilyn Miller, appeared throughout the day to review their respective organizations' priorities and plans for implementation. Three NCLIS Commissioners – Kay Riddle, Daniel Casey, and J. Michael Farrell, who served as moderator – made up the forum review panel.

Testifying on behalf of the 54,000 members of ALA, Miller gave a brief overview of the Association's pursuit of a White House Conference to help inform the public of the vital role of libraries in their lives. The effort started in 1957 with the trustees' push (through ALA's American Library Trustee Association) for a conference. Finally, moving into the implementation phase, she referred to the ALA resolution adopted January 29 (attached to the January 31 ALA Washington Newsletter), establishing three WHCLIS recommendations as ALA's top legislative priority issues for implementation:

- Adopt the Omnibus Children and Youth Literacy Initiative.
- Support NREN implementation and access for all libraries.
- Encourage sufficient funding for libraries to aid U.S. productivity.

D A T E S

JUNE 4-5: RILA Spring Conference.

JUNE 10: "Techniques of Book Repair for Circulating Collections," John Hay Library. For more information contact: Susan Millard, DSLS, 277-2726.

JUNE 19: NELINET 12th Annual ILL Spring Meeting, Brown University, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Fee: \$30 (Including continental breakfast and lunch). Contact: Maria Brady, NELINET, Inc., Two Newton Executive Park, Newton, MA 02162

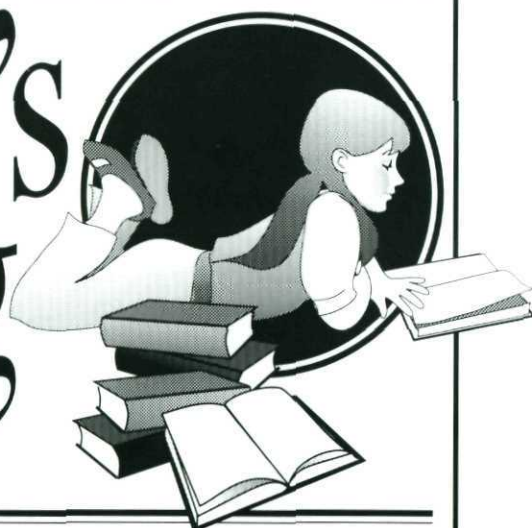
JUNE 25-JULY 2: ALA Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA.

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A FEW THOUGHTS ON CONFERENCES

BY WENDY KNICKERBOCKER

When I was in library school, I could not understand what the fuss over conferences was all about. I didn't think that a change of scenery and a chance to socialize were as important as conferences pretended to be.

I have learned a few things since those days. I know now that a change of library scenery and socializing with colleagues is reinforcing and refreshing. Finding out about other librarians and their opinions, institutions, and experiences is continuing education. Conference attendance may be a luxurious fringe benefit, but it is also time (and money) well invested.

If we are to maximize the return on our investment, then we should attend a wide range of programs. It goes without saying that we should attend programs relevant to our areas of professional specialization: these we need for our professional development. Yet we shun a golden opportunity for growth if we automatically schedule ourselves only for programs on topics that are familiar to us. Conference programs can be a relatively painless introduction to new areas of library life and to the arts and crafts of our neighbors in other departments. Let me propose a "foreign language requirement" for conference participation: attend a program on a topic about which you are relatively ignorant.

Last year at the RILA Spring Conference I volunteered to cover the registration desk during Joey Rodger's speech. My reasoning for this act of charity was that Joey Rodger is the Executive Director of the Public Library Association, I am an academic librarian, and therefore her remarks would be of less interest to me than to public librarians. All those of you who were lucky enough to hear Joey Rodger speak know just how wrong I was.

Obviously I still have a few things to learn, and I promise to take my own advice from now on. We all need to step outside the definitions which confine us and to seek those things which unite us, professionally and personally. Conferences are an appropriate environment for learning about each other and for coming together.

One caveat: do not expect the meals at conferences to be as good as "eating out." The highlights of conference meals are the entertainment or speaker and/or the company. If you have the same expectations for conference food that you do for airplane food, then you will not be disappointed.

We look forward to seeing you at Salve Regina in June!

The RILA BULLETIN is published nine times per year by the Rhode Island Library Association. Interim Editors: Wendy Knickerbocker, James P. Adams Library, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI 02908 (456-9605) and Frank Iacono, DSLS, 300 Richmond Street, Providence, RI 02903-4222 (277-2676); Feature Editor: Norman Desmarais, Providence College, Phillips Memorial Library, Providence, RI 02918 (865-2241); Jobline: Pam Stoddard, Government Documents Department, URI Library, Kingston, RI 02881 (792-2606); Advertising Manager: Elizabeth Johnson, Cranston Public Library, 140 Sockanosset Cross Road, Cranston, RI 02920 (943-9080); Subscriptions Manager: John Bucci, William Hall Library, 1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905 (781-2450). A current list of RILA Executive Board members and Committee Chairs is available in Volume 65, No. 1-2. Subscriptions: free to members; \$15/year in U.S.; \$20/year foreign. Deadlines: 1st of the month for features and 15th of the month for everything else. Advertising: \$130 full page; \$65 half page; \$40 quarter page; \$15 business card size. Change of address: members contact the Membership Committee Chair, Donna Roberts, 1503 Middle Road, East Greenwich, RI 02818 (885-3174). Subscription correspondence: contact Subscriptions Manager. For further information, contact the appropriate Editor. Technical Production: Verbatim, Inc., 769B Hope Street, Providence, RI 02906. Printing by Lewis Graphics, 1655 Elmwood Avenue, Cranston, RI 02920 (941-4444). LC 57-26438.

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