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## Rhode Island Library Association Bulletin

Volume No. V. 66 N. 3

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### *Deselection in Delibrary* (A Whimsical Title for a Topic Which is Not)

BY JUDITH STOKES

If the serials crisis has not reached your library, it is on the way. Like the oil crisis of the 1970's, it is an aspect of the recession, but it has its own perverse economics. A depressed economy means depressed prices for most types of commodities, but, as you have undoubtedly noticed by now, library materials are not like other types of commodities. Prices of serials intended for the library market tend to rise when demand falls, so the spiral cancellations sparked by price increases sparked by cancellations sparked by prices rising over the last decade or so is bringing more and more libraries into the fray.

In theory, none of us can afford to continue subscriptions while their prices grow faster than their usefulness, but, on the other hand, unless the renewal list is very short (or the staff very large) it is difficult to say just how often it is economical to revisit selection decisions. So, in most libraries, the conspicuously expensive subscriptions are questioned occasionally, and the rest are assumed to earn their keep, until there is a budget crisis.

Academic libraries, in particular, are resistant to canceling serials, because of faculty involvement in collection development; however, in almost any type of library, serials may be viewed as institutional commitments, and cancellations as broken promises. More than the books we decide we cannot afford to buy this year, the serials we cancel are likely to attract unwanted attention to the decision-making process. Thus, the widespread tendency to allow escalating serials prices to raid the book budget is an understandable one. Consequently, the bulk of the work gets postponed so that serials deselection is accomplished as a project rather than a process. The literature on cancellation projects in large academic

libraries is substantial, and there is some generally helpful information available, even for those of us who have neither subject bibliographers to coordinate nor departmental funds to allocate.<sup>1</sup>

Downsizing the subscription list will mean reshaping the collection. Does your collection development policy even include price as a factor? Does it specify the relative importance of primary and secondary clienteles and rank various types of use? Even with a clear statement of priorities, reallocating fewer and fewer dollars to meet all the same objectives may cease to be feasible at some point.

Resource-sharing is the traditional answer to library budget limitations. In at least one recent project, the economics of buying journals vs. borrowing them via interlibrary loan has provided the criterion for cancellation of hundreds of titles. Having completed an extensive survey of periodicals use, librarians at Memorial University of Newfoundland calculated cost-per-use for each title, compared those values to the average cost of an interlibrary loan, and canceled cost-ineffective subscriptions to compensate for shortfalls in university funding of the library budget.<sup>2</sup>

There is much to be said for access as an alternative to ownership of periodicals.<sup>3</sup> Commercial article-delivery services serve a large and growing market. Using electronic ordering and facsimile delivery, they deliver articles to you (or, better still, directly to the user) faster than interlibrary loan, and copyright fees are included in the price, taking fair use guidelines out of the picture. Offering the "pay as you go" alternative can take the bite out of canceling very expensive titles, and the high technology aspect presently has a certain cachet among faculty.<sup>4</sup> So far, there are no established measures of comparable benefit



beyond fill rates for requested articles, but then, actually replacing large numbers of subscriptions with subsidized article delivery services is a very recent phenomenon. Article access alternatives address only one type of library use, of course, and generally speaking, one type of user. New trends in browsing, as well as current awareness and recreational reading patterns among the high tech crowd will bear exploration as well, but that is, perhaps, beyond our scope here.<sup>5</sup>

If there is not already an established formula to fund all subjects in the periodicals collection, and reducing costs is the goal, using simple price data will target cancellations among certain subjects disproportionately to their value. Since most serials agents can list subscriptions by Library of Congress Classification, the annual U.S. Periodical Price Index table of average prices by LC Classification (in the *Library Journal* April 15th issue) can be a practical tool for establishing relative prices. Ranking subscriptions by relative price can help focus efforts on expensive subscriptions in all subjects, as well as facilitate comparison of similar titles. Be aware, however, that all subscriptions are not equal in size. Collecting each and every price-per-page may be beyond your means, but some weight should be given more substantial (usually more frequent) titles lest a bargain be deemed a luxury and vice versa.

Any process of collection evaluation is necessarily subjective and labor-intensive. No simple formula can account for all significant factors, nor will data collection be perfect in every way. However, a flexible approach, using a variety of objective and subjective measures can serve an effort to "reselect" a core collection based on economics as well as collection priorities, and focus review efforts on more questionable subscriptions.

Use studies are not only informative, but they lend authority, not to mention much-needed confidence, to staff recommendations. Allowing for the limitations of sampling and methodology, and without knowing the type of use or user, actual documented use is still downright compelling data. Low cost-per-use sets the mind at ease. On the other hand, use studies take time and labor. In a recent study of academic libraries half of them cited use as a criterion in cancellation decisions but only a third had actually conducted formal studies.<sup>6</sup>

It is possible, in some cases, to observe evidence of heavy use in the condition of issues on a shelf, and to distinguish volumes that have been handled frequently from those that have had less use. Added to staff familiarity with popular titles, such observations can provide some, admittedly rough, relative use data to be used in conjunction with other measures. Evidence of non-use, unfortunately, is always problematic.

Inclusion in specified indexes indicates potential use of a specific type, and may also indicate interdis-

ciplinary relevance. Inclusion in certain bibliographies may be a valid indicator of reputation, particularly with accrediting bodies, or may be used to help establish the intended audience of some titles relative to the library's clientele. Citation studies may be used to identify top-ranked journals among researchers,<sup>7</sup> which brings us to politics.

Journals have been called the "sacred cows" of the academic library because efforts to cancel expensive, esoteric and largely unused titles have so often been defeated by powerful faculty members. In most organizations, there are interested parties, committees, staffs, boards, parent organizations, administrators, and/or knowledgeable people whose opinions are, nonetheless, more important for the power they wield than the knowledge they contribute. Soliciting opinions and giving them reasonable consideration is difficult to do and even more so to demonstrate. Nevertheless, the impression of fairness to all parties may prove most important to the quality of the outcome.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>See: Paul Metz, "Thirteen Steps to Avoiding Bad Luck in a Serials Cancellation Project," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 18, no. 2 (1992): 76-82. Metz's advice is based on his experience at Virginia Tech and a thoughtful reading of the literature. Two studies which were not available to Metz are also of interest: Margaret Hawthorn, "Serials Selection and Deselection: A Survey of North American Academic Libraries," *Serials Librarian* 21, no. 1 (1991): 29-45; David L. Perkins "Weed It and Reap," *Serials Librarian* 18, no. 1/2 (1990): 131-40.

<sup>2</sup>Dorothy Milne and Bill Tiffany, "A Survey of the Cost Effectiveness of Serials: A Cost-Per-Use Method and Its Results," *Serials Librarian* 19, no. 3/4 (1991): 137-49.

<sup>3</sup>Eldred Smith, "Resolving the Acquisitions Dilemma: Into the Electronic Information Environment," *College & Research Libraries* 52 (1991): 231-40.

<sup>4</sup>Ulmschneider, John, "Integrated Electronic Document Delivery: Linchpin for Campus Information Systems," *Educom Review* 27 (Nov/Dec 1992): 42-5.

<sup>5</sup>Murray S. Martin, "The Invasion of the Library Materials Budget by Technology Serials and Databases: Buying More with Less?" *Serials Review* 18, no. 3 (1992): 7-17.

<sup>6</sup>Margaret Hawthorn, "Serials Selection and Deselection: A Survey of North American Academic Libraries," *Serials Librarian* 21, no. 1 (1991): 40.

<sup>7</sup>Keith Swigger and Adeline Wilkes, "The Use of Citation Data to Evaluate Serials Subscriptions in an Academic Library," *Serials Review* 17, no. 2 (1991): 41-6.

Judith Stokes is the Serials Librarian at Rhode Island College.





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# ***Guidance Information System (GIS)***

## ***What is it?***

BY JANE E. PERRY

The Guidance Information system (GIS) is an electronic database used to find information on colleges, graduate and professional schools, financial aid, occupations and armed services careers. Patrons use the system to meet their needs by choosing specific characteristics that are most important to them. For each set of characteristics chosen, GIS provides a list of schools, occupations, financial aid sources, or armed services opportunities.

The GIS program is fairly easy to learn and, with some assistance, patrons can begin using the system's basic operations on their own. Using GIS can be much quicker than using printed sources, although those sources should not be overlooked. GIS is also fairly comprehensive with its "accurate and up-to-date information on over a thousand occupations, over three thousand colleges and universities and millions of dollars worth of financial aid." (GIS Counselor's Manual, p. 1).

### ***History***

GIS is a product of the Riverside Publishing Company. An new release, GIS II, became available to all users in December 1992. The system was developed from a project called Information System for Vocational Decisions sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education. The project began in 1966 as a three year effort headed by Dr. David V. Tiedman, Professor of Education at Harvard. An independent effort of several faculty and staff members associated with the Harvard program further designed and developed the system.

### ***GIS Files***

The information in GIS is set up in files. These files include: Armed Services, 2-Year College Information, 4-Year College Information, Graduate and Professional Schools, Financial Aid Information, Majors and Careers, Interest Inventory Score-Entry, Rhode Island State Files and State Vocational School Information.

There are two ways to search the files: the Direct Method and the Search Method. Using the Direct Method, if the user knows, for example, the name of a particular college, he/she may receive an overview (Profile) or an In-Depth description of that institution. Using the Search Method, the user selects a custom made list of characteristics by choosing from a list of over 500. The user chooses the characteristics that best meet his/her needs. When the search is narrowed to a manageable number of colleges/jobs then the user can display names and then use the Profile or In-depth commands to view specific information.

### ***GIS Uses***

Here at the Newport Public Library, the major use of GIS has been to locate colleges. Along with juniors and seniors in high school and their parents looking for colleges, college students also use GIS to find graduate schools or for the purpose of transferring. This year, however we have noticed an increase in patrons looking for financial aid information. We have also had patrons browsing through the professional school file considering a career change. There are, however, other uses. A new feature of GIS is the Majors and Careers file where one can look up a particular major field and find information about possible careers or industries. The data in this file is based on a study by the Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies. GIS can also be used to find armed forces career information. When a library patron is returning to the labor force, changing careers or looking for a new job, the GIS national and Rhode Island State files can provide valuable career information.

### ***GIS II***

In December 1992, GIS II became available to all users. It is easier to use and graphically appealing. The user may choose icons to get to the files and characteristics or search directly by entering the name or partial name of an occupation or school. This eliminates the need for manuals to look up the code number for a direct search. Other new features in GIS II include the ability to save work and return to it later.

### ***Cost***

Either version of GIS can be run on an Apple or an IBM (or compatible) PC with a hard drive. A printer is optional, but we have found most patrons prefer the ability to print out their searches. A good system would cost approximately \$1,200.00. Libraries in Rhode Island with Quahog already have the equipment needed to run GIS. The annual lease fee for the GIS Software is \$1,950.00 There are currently about 40 subscribers in Rhode Island. Within our present price category, if there were above 50 subscribers, the price would drop.

### ***Finally***

Overall, GIS is a very useful system. Newport Public Library started out with GIS on a computer in the office and the librarians would schedule appointments with patrons to search for college and career information. Once we set up our Quahog station, we moved GIS out into the public access area where patrons were able, with some instruction and assistance, to do their own searching. Once GIS II was installed, finding college and career information through GIS at the Newport Public Library became even easier and faster than ever.

*Jane Perry is the Young Adult Librarian at the Newport Public Library.*



## BULLETIN BOARD

The Rally for America's Libraries sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) continues in 1993 with a campaign to collect real life stories about how libraries make a difference. The 1993 campaign will urge members of the public to share, in 100 words or less, how the library "changed" or made a difference in their lives. This "testimony" will be used to support ALA's legislative and public awareness efforts. Petitions can also be circulated for those who wish simply to register their support.

A poster tip-sheet with suggestions for how local libraries can take advantage of the campaign appears in the January issue of *American Libraries* magazine. Additional copies are available free from the ALA Public Information Office (Tel: 800-545-2433, ext. 5044/5041).

A panel of distinguished judges will select three people who submit the most original and inspiring "Great Library Success Stories" to be honored June 26 at the Opening General Session of the association's annual conference in New Orleans. They will also join an ALA delegation to take the campaign results to Capitol Hill.

Microsoft® Corporation will underwrite travel expenses for the winners and provide other rewards with total retail value of \$35,000 for participating libraries. The new Microsoft Encarta (TM) Multimedia Encyclopedia and personal computer with CD-ROM hardware will be awarded to both the person whose testimonial is judged the best and the library where it is submitted. The two runners-up will receive the Encarta.

The first 500 libraries that submit 25 or more success stories will receive the Encarta if they indicate they have CD-ROM equipment and wish to receive a copy. All other libraries that submit stories will be entered in a drawing for a copy of the Encarta, one \$500, two \$250 and ten \$100 gift certificates for ALA Graphics.

Success stories can be submitted at participating libraries or mailed directly to Rally for America's Libraries, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. Petitions are also available.

The Rally for America's Libraries was launched at the 1991 ALA Annual Conference to rally support for America's libraries at a time of financial crisis.



Donna Dufault, Director of the North Kingstown Public Library, is ALA's National Library Week Committee Chairperson. She would like to receive any/all information as to how Rhode Island libraries are taking part in National Library Week and has many ideas herself, one of which – the wearing of little blue ribbons – was successfully demonstrated at ALA Midwinter.



The U.S. Department of Education's Library Literacy Program has awarded money to the East Providence Library for the formation of a consortium of four public libraries located in the towns of East Providence, Barrington, Bristol and Warren who have united to purchase a collection of materials to assist adults who are learning to read or who are improving their reading skills. The four libraries will be known as the East Bay Literacy Cooperative.

Former Assistant Director of the East Providence Library, Fran Farrell Bergeron, has been hired as the Coordinator of the East Bay Literacy Cooperative.

Fran is in charge of ordering new materials for all four libraries' literacy collections and she is compiling a manual on starting a literacy collection for all the libraries in the state.



After two years of planning, nine librarians have formally established the Ponaganset Regional Libraries Network, comprising school and public libraries, to share resources and improve service to residents.

Patti Folsom, librarian at Ponaganset High School, said the Foster-Glocester Regional School Committee recently approved the network.

The member libraries include the libraries at the regional middle school and high school, at the Fogarty Memorial School and the West Glocester Elementary School in Glocester and the Capt. Isaac Paine Elementary School in Foster.

The other members are the Glocester Manton Free Library and the Harmony Public Library, both in Glocester, and Tyler Free Library and Foster Public Library in Foster.





The ADDD Fund of the R.I. Community Foundation has awarded Incentive Grants to foster planned fund-raising programs to five public libraries: Coventry, Foster, Providence, Tyler (Foster), George Hail (Warren). These grants are awarded only if fundraising goals are achieved. Also, Archive-Document-Display-Disseminate Project Grants were awarded to one library organization and three libraries as follows:

- COLA to assist in the mailing and distribution of Rhode Island's Governor's Conference report, An Agenda for the Nineties. (\$350).
- Westerly Public Library to assist in the production of four video interviews and a standing display on "how a book is made." (\$450).
- Providence Public Library for the design and production of 5 brochures (of a future set of 15) explaining library services in English and Spanish. (\$1,000).
- Jamestown Philomenian Library to match funds for purchase of software for indexing the local newspaper. (\$600).

For more information about this foundation contact Herman Rose at 724-927S or Carol Golden at 274-4564.



RILA'S Annual Conference in June has been moved one week to accommodate construction and renovation for accessibility at Salve Regina College. The new dates are June 10-11.

## **CALENDAR**

**MARCH 16:** Freedom of Information Day

**MARCH 22:** Library Board of RI, West Warwick Public Library, 4-6 PM

**APRIL 6:** RILA Executive Board, Cumberland Public Library

**APRIL 18-24:** National Library Week

**APRIL 20:** ALA Legislative Day, Washington, D.C.

**APRIL 21:** Young Adult Round Table, "Oral History," South Kingstown Public Library, 9 AM

**APRIL 26:** Library Board of RI, North Smithfield Public Library, 4-6 PM

**JUNE 10-11:** RILA Annual Conference, Salve Regina College (Note change in date!)

## **PEOPLE**

**CHARLENE ERTL** has joined the children's services staff at Pawtucket Public Library with her appointment as Librarian I.

**DAVID A. KING**, Executive Director of The Champlin foundations, was named COLA's (Coalition of Library Advocates) "Sweetheart of the Year" in honor of the outstanding contributions he and his organization have made and continue to make to libraries and library service in Rhode Island.

**DEBORAH MONGEAU**, Government Publications Librarian at URI, is the incoming President of the Government Publications Librarians of New England (GPLNE), taking office after the organization's annual meeting in May.

## **JOB LINE**

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR.** The Board of Trustees of the Edythe L. Dyer Community Library is seeking an innovative, service-oriented Library Director. The Edythe L. Dyer Library serves a community of 5,600 with a collection of 27,000 items and annual circulation of 123,000. **QUALIFICATIONS.** ALA/MLS and public library experience. Supervisory experience preferred. Salary \$25,000. Send letter of application, resume and 3 references to Search Committee, Edythe L. Dyer Community Library, 269 Main Road North. Hampden, Maine 04444. Applications close 3/15/93.

**WARREN SMITH**  
Library Assistant  
Greenville Public Library  
(also Student)

**PATRICIA SMITH**  
Library Assistant  
Greenville Public Library  
(also Student)



## ***A Letter to the RILA Membership from Its President:***

For the past several years, the Rhode Island Library Association has honored a special member of the rather elite group of volunteers known as "library trustees." The RILA "Library Trustee of the Year" award is conferred annually by the Association at its spring conference. The award seeks to recognize and extol outstanding and/or sustained service by a trustee to his/her library. The honoree may serve on the Board of any public, private, academic, school or special library in Rhode Island.

Library Directors at many of these institutions have already been mailed letters seeking nominations for this award. However, since some libraries may have escaped our attention, or letters become lost in the mails, I wanted to address the membership as a whole about this important award.

Please realize that *any* RILA member is eligible to submit a nomination or behalf of one of their own trustees; Library staff or Friends of the Library may submit nominations; and even other Trustees may nominate one of their fellow Board members. The RILA Executive Board view this recognition as very worthwhile, and we hope you will make the effort to spotlight a deserving trustee.

Below are criteria for you to consider as you deliberate about your choice for this year's award.

This year's nomination deadline is *Friday, April 30th*. Nomination letters should be sent to Janet A. Levesque, RILA President, c/o Cumberland Public Library, 1464 Diamond Hill Road, Cumberland, RI 02864.

Thank you for taking the time to submit your choice for this year's "Trustee of the Year" award!

### ***RI Library Trustee of the Year Award***

- WHO? Any trustee of any library who has served on his/her board at least 3 years.

These are suggested guidelines (but by no means the only ones) upon which a nomination may be made:

- Nominee worked in a readily identifiable way to develop/improve library service to a community (or to a specific segment within that community).
- Nominee successfully lobbied for increased funding and/or resources for his/her library (specifics required).

- Nominee identified a community need for library service and successfully fashioned a means of satisfying that need (e.g. was instrumental in getting a new, larger building to supplant a small inefficient one).
- Nominee fashioned a plan that successfully enhanced the library's role in the community or improved relations between the library and other significant community service groups.
- Nominee was instrumental in networking with trustees from other libraries to foster coop planning or activities.

Letters of nomination covering salient points (as noted above) followed by interviews with persons who have written letters of recommendation.

*(Continued From Back Cover)*

With the aid of the Consensus Management Group consulting firm, a management study of ALA is being done with a proposed completion date of Midwinter 1994. In addition, the Self-Study Committee is doing an overall analysis of ALA operations with a report due at the 1995 Annual Conference. One last issue proving to be a bee in a few bonnets was the question of the McDonald's Corporation sponsorship of a certain reading program for children in libraries. All program materials are furnished free by McDonald's and prominently feature the McDonald's logo. The Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) of ALA is on record as opposing library involvement with McDonald's, arguing that libraries should not be promoting, however indirectly, their products to children. SRRT communicated this to McDonald's and, as a round table group, did not need ALA's approval to do so. The Association of Library Service to Children (ALSC), however, strongly supports the program and, at its behest, Council passed a resolution commending McDonald's and expressing appreciation for their efforts on behalf of children and libraries.

So that's Midwinter in a nutshell. Call me with any questions relating to ALA and I'll be glad to dig into my mountains of paper for an answer - we're talking some serious mountain peeks here. Sorry, just a little high altitude humor.



## Remembrance of Meetings Past: ALA Midwinter

FRANK IACONO, ALA COUNCILOR

I don't know which was more impressive, the beautiful Rocky Mountains hovering over a Spring-like Denver throughout the ALA Midwinter Conference or the mountains of paper generated by ALA Council for councilors' attention. Probably the latter, as my over-burdened three-ring binder would attest. Nonetheless, my overall reaction to Council meetings, as a rookie Council member, was fascination – fascination at how a 168-member governing body reaches consensus on behalf of ALA's 55,000 members. You could also throw in a large measure of enjoyment too, based on the wonderful, dedicated people/characters one gets to meet in the course of the meetings, caucuses, and, of course, receptions.

Council meetings this Midwinter were characterized by some veteran Council-goers as more interesting than most in that they were spiced with sufficient amounts of controversy, drama (in some cases, melodrama), and opportunities for genuine social action to keep drudgery to a minimum. In the social action category, Council voted to move the 1998 Conference out of Colorado in protest of Colorado's Amendment 2 legislation banning protection for homosexuals against discrimination in housing employment, and public accommodations. Council also voted to have the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) review the Library Bill of Rights with the idea that "gender" and "sexual orientation" should be included along with "origin, age, background, or views" as having no bearing on a person's right to use a library. Look for the IFC to recommend changes at the summer conference in New Orleans.

The initial controversial agenda item before Council involved the now famous unpublished article submitted to *American Libraries* relating to the Executive Board expenses at conferences and the now infamous editorial by AL editor Tom Gaughan published in response to it (see the January issue) that only added fuel to the fire. Most people's opinion, including my own, is that it is all a case of much ado about nothing. When all was said and done (which took a while), the question became not so much the expenses, and allegations relating to them, as the role of *American Libraries* in all this. Thus, the matter was referred to the ALA Publications Committee. Another issue fraught with questions was President Marilyn Miller's proposed "Billions of Books and Billions of Bucks" proposal (see February's *School Library Journal*, page 43). To say that this proposal has been greeted with a great deal of skepticism is a major understatement and Council members had many questions for President Miller, who has appointed fundraising consultant Denver Frederick to assess the validity of the project. Speaking of consultants, Council also was given an update on the ALA self-study undertaken by the ALA Self-Study Committee established by Council in San Francisco last year.

(Continued on Page 7)

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