At the Crossroads: Assessing and responding to change

Highlights of ACRL programs at ALA's Annual Conference: Part II

Adjusting to change, making room for multiculturalism, and assuring continued progress, both technological and social were some of the issues covered by ACRL at ALA's 112th Annual Conference in New Orleans. Highlights of some ACRL programs are given below; part one appeared in September. (See the September issue for information on ordering audiotapes of selected programs.)

The role of libraries in conceptualizing American history

"Portraits of Louisiana: Empowering Communities through Diversity," a multi-media program presented by the Anthropology and Sociology Section, was set within the larger debate current in American society concerning who we are and how to conceptualize our history. Four speakers discussed the documentation of selected groups, the role of libraries and archives in that endeavor, and the importance of that role towards resolving the debate. Joint sponsors were ACRL Afro-American Studies Librarians Section, ACRL Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee and the Reference and Adult Services Division History Section.

Florence Borders (archivist, Center for African and African American Studies, Southern University at New Orleans) spoke eloquently of the historical accomplishments of Afro-Louisiana women and described her efforts to increase access to their documentation. As founder of the Chicory Society for Afro-Louisiana History and Culture and editor of the Chicory Review, she created her own vehicle for that purpose. Irvan Perez (a spokesperson for the St. Bernard Isleño community, Louisiana) described Isleño history and culture and his concerns with preserving it. He also sang three décimas, traditional Spanish songs that form an important part of the group's oral history. Ulysses Ricard (Senior Archivist, Amistad Research Center) spoke authoritatively of Louisiana's Creoles and others of African descent in early Louisiana. He referred to his ongoing collection and study of their historical documentation. He described the Amistad Research Center's mission and how such collections broaden our understanding of minorities' contributions. Finally, Marcia Gaudet (folklorist, University of Southwestern Louisiana) spoke of the history and multi-faceted culture of Cajuns, illustrating it with slides from the Cajun rural Mardi Gras. She emphasized the pivotal role libraries and archives play in providing accurate cultural documentation to counteract too often inaccurate images in the media or more popular writings.—Maggie Dittemore, University of Pennsylvania

EBSS celebrates 25 years

What does personality theory have to do with the American character, education reform, and AIDS prevention? Quite a lot, according to Dr. Frank Farley, 1993 president of the American Psychological Association and guest speaker at the 25th Anniversary program for the Education and Behavioral Sciences Section. Farley discussed his research on people with the Type-T personality—the highly creative, questing thrill-seekers and risk-takers who are responsible for both human progress and many of the world's most destructive forces. Farley feels Type T is fundamental to the human race; other species play by the rules, but we live in and for the unknown. The survival skill for the 21st century—something educators need to teach their students—will be the ability to deal with change. Education will consist of the four Rs: reading, writing, 'rithmetic, and risk-taking. Type-T kids must be channeled into positive, constructive risk-taking activities at an early age, or they will seek the "T-negative" thrills of delinquency, violence, and crime.

Farley characterized the United States as a Type-T nation, with a relatively high percentage of Type Ts. This may be a result of the
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Techniques & technology: Striving to connect with adult learners
Speakers Mem Catania, Gwendolyn Chandler, and Elizabeth Burge examined the factors that must be considered in preparing to support adult learners and the changes that technology has brought and will continue to bring to the continuing education experience during the Extended Campus Library Services' program. Four characteristics were identified as being critical to the success of learning experiences for the adult learner: empowerment, relevance to adulthood, informed use of models, and connectedness. The differences between teacher-centered and learner-centered models of learning were presented. Six “Cs” in the program development process were reviewed: create a climate, connect learner to resources, change the agenda, confirm learning, correct misunderstanding, and challenge the individual to learn further. The need for connectedness, the evidence of relationships between one’s own and others’ knowledge, was explored. The importance of reliable, transparent, and appropriate learning technologies was underscored. —Kenneth Marks, East Carolina University

Three approaches to a Brave New World: SEES’s special program
The three speakers on the Slavic and East European Section’s program: “Brave New World: Slavic and East European Librarianship in the Post-Soviet Era,” addressed three critical areas which have been dramatically affected by the recent upheavals in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: collection development, research, and preservation. Harold Leich (Library of Congress) described how traditional
means of centralized bibliographic control, publishing, and distribution in the former Soviet Union have collapsed, which has made acquisitions and collection development in the West more difficult. The critical means for coping with the current Russian book scene are flexibility, contact, communication, and travel. Such initiatives as the survey of the collecting of foreign research materials by the Association of Research Libraries and Library of Congress’ library intern program for Russian librarians are helping to create a new world of cooperation.

While granting that scholarly access to library and archival material in Eurasia and Central and Eastern Europe is unprecedented, Carol Erickson (International Research and Exchange Board (IREX)), stated that “the research landscape is without controls or standard policies with regard to ‘foreign’ scholars.” She described the many problems that are increasingly affecting access to materials: deteriorating facilities, staff shortages, preservation problems, lack of equipment such as photocopy machines, new and often exorbitant fees for access, usage, and photocopying. IREX is currently sponsoring many library and archival projects relating to the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Hans Rütimann (Commission on Preservation and Access) focused on yet another crisis, one on an international scale—preservation of the human record. The world’s libraries and archives “are losing, at an alarming rate, an enormous proportion of our collective memory.” But there is a growing awareness of the problem, and in a new development richer countries are coming to the aid of less advantaged areas. He spoke of UNESCO’s “Memory of the World” program and the European Register of Microform Masters (sponsored in part by the Commission) and other projects. Future success in preservation efforts will depend on continuing international cooperation. Dennis Kimmage (SUNY at Plattsburgh) served as the discussant in this well-attended program.—Tatiana Barr, Stanford University

Clear thinking and blunt prose

At the Women’s Studies Section program, “Women’s Popular Literature: Challenges for the Curriculum and Librarians,” Dr. Emily Toth, Louisiana State University—Baton Rouge, addressed the impact of women’s literature on (Continued on page 526)

Mainstream or margins?—RBMS preconference

Exploring survival in an environment of reduced resources and technological innovation, those attending the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section’s 34th Preconference heard observations and recommendations of several colleagues. University of Virginia president John Casteen placed special collections at the heart of a research library’s “core business of preserving primary sources in their least edited or fictionalized form.” For a generation of scholars trained primarily in theory, special collections “are a new and as yet incompletely known source of pleasure which we are eager to explore,” stated anthropology professor Judith Goldstein of Vassar College. She cited her own research and that of colleagues as examples of “how the questions we ask point to new uses for old collections.” Thriving in the electronic mainstream, asserted University of Washington Library director Betty Bengston, requires increased online accessibility to special collections. “Be prepared to deal with increased usage,” added Emory University Library director Joan Gotwals. UCLA assistant university librarian for technical services Brian Schottlaender advocated “balance between a shrinking pool of cataloging resources and expanding set of access needs” through negotiation of standards with the technical services department. To meet demands of efficiency and scholarship, William Jones, assistant university librarian for collections development and information services at the University of Illinois, Chicago, suggested “more discriminating review of which policies in special collections must be followed to the letter and which may be flexibly applied.” Kansas City Public Library director Daniel Bradbury offered the option of de-accessioning in light of a library’s overall mission. Summarizing the plenary sessions, UCLA head of special collections David Zeidberg listed ways for special collections to operate more effectively in the overall library context. “Do not let the mainstream control us,” he warned. “Rather than being swept along, step out of the flood and review where we are being taken.”—Robert Parks, Pierpont Morgan Library
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- Recruit four or more new members and receive free membership in ACRL for one year for yourself, plus your name will be placed in a drawing for one free trip (airfare and lodging) to the ACRL Seventh National Conference in Pittsburgh, March 29–April 1, 1995.

To be eligible for prizes, forms must be received in the ACRL office by January 29, 1994.

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"Mark of the Maker: Twinrocker Handmade Paper." Chicago: McGowan Film and Video, 1991. 28 min. (This was nominated for an Academy Award.)


"Providing a Future for the Past." Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Preservation Division. 13 min.


"A Tour of Heckman Bindery." North Manchester, IN: Heckman Bindery, Inc., 1991. (P.O. Box 89, North Manchester, IN 46962)

librarians, support staff and student assistants on all Indiana University campuses, teaching faculty and students systemwide (particularly those enrolled in the School of Library and Information Science), Monroe County residents and library donors.

The Preservation Committee, which included four staff and four librarians from a variety of departments and branches was chaired by Dee Mortensen, reference and collections assistant for African studies. "Hard work, good timing and bringing preservation out of the laboratory," made the project successful according to Mortensen.

Ed. note: The 1994 John Cotton Dana Contest deadline is February 8. Copies of the entry forms are available by writing The John Cotton Dana Library PR Awards Contest, The H. W. Wilson Company, 950 University Avenue, Bronx, NY 10452.