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SEPTEMBER COVER



There they were, lying in the street, a librarian's nightmare, warped and covered with a muddy syrup—the beloved books from the basement of the Osterhout Public Library in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. They were lost and soon to be carted away to join the tons of refuse of households and businesses created by the aftermath of Hurricane Agnes. See pp. 845-46 and Memo to Members.

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The ALTA 400 Club. *All-out* is the word for ALTA's attempts to increase their endowment fund to a point where they need not depend on ALA for program support. A 400 Club has been established for all ALTA members paying (over a two-year period) \$50 over and above their dues. They are also contacting companies and foundations for contributions to their endowment.

JMRT Growing. *Cognotes*, a daily account of conference highlights, appeared at this session and could be seen waving over cups of coffee, tucked under arms, and peeking from exhibitors' shopping bags. It was a lot of work, but it was useful if not always accurate. It had a welcome impact and conference-goers hope that JMRT can keep it up.

The annual JMRT orientation program held on Sunday afternoon is still growing in size and appreciation but this year's program, featuring editors from *American Libraries*, *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal* and *Wilson Library Bulletin* in a "meet the press" format with members of COPEs and the Executive Board ran into a snag. The idea had its basic merits and was interesting because the members of COPEs and the Executive Board were cooperative. But some of the questions asked by the press were predicated on a well-based knowledge of the workings and recent history of ALA. Many of the people in the audience were having their first exposure to the diverse facets of ALA and the intricacies of the Zoia Horn matter, for example, bewildered them. When the audience was invited to direct questions to the Executive Board and COPEs, they were further confounded to see some of ALA's older members rise to the occasion with further deep and philosophical questioning. As a result the newly arrived and newly oriented found themselves somewhat intimidated.

The JMRT Tithe. As a final note in all of the fiscal whirlwinds of ALA, we must note that, of all the round tables in ALA which pay nothing toward the services they extract from the parent ALA, JMRT is the first to rise and announce

that it was giving a check to ALA for \$200 to help pay for the staff and overhead services they receive. It reflects well upon the round table and its aware membership.

GODOCS RT—Wow. They turned people away as more than five hundred tried to jam into a room set up for half that many at the debut of the Government Documents Round Table. A basic organization was established and there were plenty of programs scattered throughout the week to add to the newest focus group in the round table set. It is also indicative that many more librarians dealing in special services want the opportunity for professional exchange.

Sad Note in SRRT. We can't pass up comment on a SRRT questionnaire conducted by Clearinghouse Secretary Miriam Crawford. She had asked if the members wanted a directory of their names. We will let her words from her report to the SRRT membership describe the response: "Quite a few people were vigorously opposed to this, apparently because it would serve to pinpoint radical or liberal librarians to unsympathetic administrations, and because it would provide an avenue for government intimidation." We would be naive if we said that there were no library administrations which would "label" an employee that was a member of SRRT. But the disturbing point to us is that SRRT members think of themselves as some kind of frightening radical movement. True, some people get upset because they push into areas long kept under the antimacassar but not once have they advocated or used violence. I believe that the majority of ALA members feel that the association has been the better for SRRT. We are sorry the round table members have been in a sort of transition period at Chicago as they ironed out organizational problems with the help of admitted "structure freak" Mitch Freedman. But their plans for a midwinter session on prison service sounds like the old "know-how"; if they produce the speaker at Las Vegas who advocates sexual experience for eight-year-olds, it will be like old times. Happily, they man-

aged to bring in the Rev. Jesse Jackson to their Chicago program for an electrifying evening.

Farewell to Many. The conference was David H. Clift's farewell to his role as executive director and there were so many standing ovations that I heard someone refer to them as "recurring seventh inning stretches." Robert Wedgeworth, executive director designate, was on hand observing what was in store for him.

Business As Unusual. The Chicago conference had many charms and some substance but it was not a return to the "good old days" some were hoping for in their comments in this magazine the past few months. The old days were *not* good and the current constricting economy is not letting up in its pressure on people who want to earn their personal satisfactions and salaries in libraries. But it became even more evident at Chicago that many librarians have fled the scene of battle and have holed up in their ivory towers and cinched up that bun at the back of the head (that we are told no longer exists).

ALA support continues to drop at a time when it needs a stronger voice. Part of the blame can be put to the members currently on the rolls. They would never once betray their tattered liberalism by standing up for what they believe in and tell off those willing to work *in* library service but never *for* it. It would be too much to really believe in libraries enough to actually bring members into the national association instead of verbally patting non-members on the back and saying "I understand."

Well, this editor doesn't understand. I find something deep inside me that recoils from the librarian draped in wisps of professionalism who proclaims; "I believe in what I'm doing. I'm concerned for the people I serve. I want the best for them, but don't ask me to join ALA. I don't owe it anything." To me those people are parasites and those that employ them get the quality they deserve if they accept rhetoric instead of commitment as librarianship.

An era passes with the retirement of David H. Clift and of Gerrie