



## Letters

To the Editor:

I applaud your editorial in the November issue of *College and Research Libraries* on identifying the best librarians, but an underlying assumption upsets me enough to write about my concerns. Though you refer to the catalog librarian early on, your paragraph on "library superstars" includes the following: "The focus will be on direct patron contact and services." Do you mean by this that catalogers, acquisitions librarians, systems librarians, and others who serve behind the scenes are not as worthy of consideration as those who deal directly with the public? Are all the trenches only in public services? Does this statement imply that the hard working and innovative technical services or systems librarian is not important in the delivery of library service?

Later on you state that "while recognized by you and campus users this person may be otherwise unknown." It may be even worse for those who serve behind the scenes because they lack recognition from the campus user who nonetheless depends heavily on their efforts. How much direct recognition does the systems librarian receive for an emergency trip to the library at 3:00 A.M. to make sure that the online catalog is available when the library opens?

I also acknowledge that I am writing this letter in part because this is not the first time I have perceived a bias in ACRL against technical services. Without building a lengthy case, look at the papers presented at the ACRL Seattle Conference, though paper diversity improved immensely at the Baltimore meeting.

I have been a continuous member of ACRL since joining ALA in 1974 and have attended all the national conferences. At times, I have wondered why. ACRL is a type of library division and as such should consider the needs and aspirations of *all* academic librarians. We have LITA, RASD, and RTSD to address our concerns as a specific type of academic librarian. Even if unintentional, any bias for or against any class of academic librarian can only work against ACRL's effectiveness and may potentially reduce membership.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

ROBERT P. HOLLEY

University of Utah

Ed. note: Alice Spitzer, who is cited as a library superstar in the January editorial, is in charge of a serials record unit, and John Edens, who is also mentioned, is director of Central Technical Services at SUNY-Buffalo.

To the Editor:

Over the 15 years *The U\*N\*A\*B\*A\*S\*H\*E\*D Librarian, the How I Run My Library "Good" Letter* has been published, it has run a number of articles suggesting ways to a higher "fill rate" than the 54 percent reported in "Material Availability: A Study of Academic Library Performance" by Anne Ciliberti and others (*C&RL* 11/87).

We published an article in the seventies on the "Always Available Book System." This described a procedure for checking the shelves and replacing books in frequent demand but not reserved by users.

## LOCATION

AUTHOR: Dunkling, Leslie.  
 REF. TITLE: The Guinness book of names. -  
 929.4 PUBLISHER: Guinness Superlatives ;  
 Du 1986.  
 LOOK FOR IN 192 pages. : illustrations.  
 REFERENCE Includes index.  
 RCOM \* \* \* \* \*  
 LOOK UNDER THE FOLLOWING SUBJECT(S)  
 FOR INFORMATION ON RELATED BOOK(S)

1. SUBJECT: names. 1. title.

cip shelf 86-217288 MARCIVE#  
 ISBN 0-85112469-0 (pbk.); 009/22/878-2 (hard)

In another seventies article, an intern at the Orange California Public Library described her job as a "floorwalker." She would look for puzzled patrons and welcome the opportunity to solve their problems (mostly catalog use difficulties, by the way). A college library might use a corp of trained student aids as floorwalkers.

Over the years I have been advocating the "Scilken Supercard." On the "Supercard" many of the elements are identified in English. Very few abbreviations are used [see figure 1]. (U\*L published a survey by Sanford Berman which found that many library staff members could not decipher many catalog card abbreviations.)

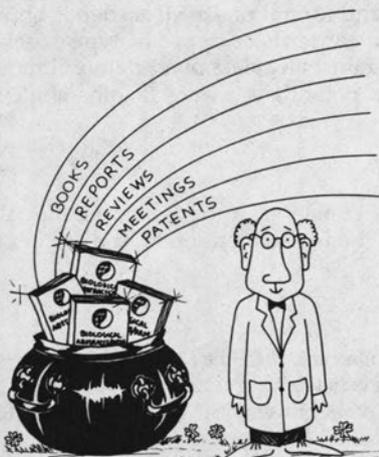
It's been my observation that the dictionary catalog helps the person looking in the wrong place. I recall studies found that many readers "give up" after only one "look" when they don't find what they are seeking. From this I postulated a law (my second): "the chance of finding a correct catalog entry is inversely proportional to the number of places to look."

MARVIN H. SCILKEN

Editor, *The U\*N\*A\*B\*A\*S\*H\*E\*D Librarian*

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