

Everything Changes, Nothing Changes: Snippets from Past Issues of *InULA Notes*

by Jay Wilkerson

This issue of *InULA Notes*, the first of the new millennium, takes a look back into the past millennium; hence its title, "Bridging the Millenium." Plans for digitizing past issues, all the way back through the initial issues of the *InULA Scoop Sheet*, are all but finalized. We still must address the issue of unbinding the library's copies for scanning and hiring a student to do the work, but all indications are that this is a doable project. In investigating the ins and outs of digitizing the historical record I've had the pleasure of reading past issues. One thing the Communications Committee noticed in reading the past newsletters was the recurring nature of certain topics throughout the years. Despite all the changes over more than three decades some topics seem to come up again, and again, and again. I hope to be able to present future articles devoted to individual recurring topics in *InULA Notes*, but for this article I decided to concentrate on a single issue from the spring of 1981 (Vol. 12, No. 1). The issue was titled "How do you feel?" and asked several members of the profession to relate their feelings about changes in librarianship, self-esteem, the relevance of librarianship, the respect shown the profession, and the future of librarianship. What follows are selected snippets from eyes of librarians past.

Fred Musto, Visiting Assistant Librarian, Reference Department

The relevance of librarianship is in the eye of the beholder. There are those who would try to put it on a par with missionary work--bringing salvation through knowledge to the ignorant masses tottering on the edge of intellectual starvation. Such lofty notions are unnecessary; if we simply value learning for its own sake, then librarianship needs no special justification. And if we value our work, then why would we consider change? Granted, librarians will never get rich, but we knew that before we entered the field.

David Kaser, Professor of Library Science, School of Library and Information Science

Have I ever felt 'put down' as a librarian? Never. People have tried to put me down, but I have simply smiled and said, 'That's alright; I'll pray for you.' Has my self-esteem changed over the years? No, not since 1955 when I first began to feel I had learned Dr. Bishop's secret.[You'll have to go to the original to discover this secret. - Jay] Have I ever doubted the relevance of librarianship? Not a whit. Do I foresee [sic] changes in librarianship? Only in our techniques; I foresee librarians in the twenty-fifth century performing exactly the same social functions as they have always performed: acquiring, organizing, preserving, and delivering the human record, regardless of what format it may then be in. If they are not still doing it then, civilization will long since have passed from the face of this planet.

Dianne Albers, Secretary, Circulation Department, MLS

It is often heard that technology threatens to render librarians obsolete. Yet here I feel no real threat to me professionally. True, technology allows the capability to access information with amazing speed and accuracy, and at times I've felt overwhelmed by its complexity. But there will always be the need for one who is skilled at framing the question, one who is skilled at making

good judgements where the computer interfaces with the user. In the right hands (and with the right head) technology promises to free the librarian for services which are now relegated to the sidelines.

Carla Long, MLS student, School of Library and Information Science

It is possible that I will need to accept a job that is less than Full Librarian. If so, I will consider the situation as a form of apprenticeship. It is also possible that I will take such a job, considering it 'apprenticeship leading up ladder to librarianship' while the library administrators will uncompromisingly believe 'once support staff, always support staff.' There may be library administrators who ask neophyte librarians to exhibit unswerving devotion, unquestioning obedience and unblinking attention, then hold them hostage with the attitude 'there are dozens more where you came from, kid--one bad day and you're back on the streets.'

Eva Kiewitt, Head of the School of Library and Information Science Library and Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science

It is exciting and challenging to see the explosion in the amount of information, the resources, and the technological advances. Not only have these changes been of tremendous value for patron service but they have been personally stimulating. In order to learn more of the use of automation it was necessary to take classes and workshops. It was exciting to initiate and direct a computer searching service for faculty and students, i.e., ERIC/PROBE. New technology, such as microcomputers, make it challenging to keep abreast of changes via continuing education.

I'm sure in reading the above snippets some memories of past times have been sparked; the passion of Dr. Kaser is the most poignant memory for me. I also hope that the above passages stir feelings about what it means to be a librarian and allow you a moment to reflect on what IU librarianship is all about, regardless of what millenium we find ourselves in today. Still, I couldn't help but take this one more step. I've included below an excerpt of a book review from this spring 1981 issue, and follow it with a question that I hope elicits responses from you, the reader. If it does the responses will be included in the next *InULA Notes*. Also, feel free to respond to any of the snippets above if so moved. Send all comments to wilkersj@indiana.edu. If response to this article is positive I'll whip up some selections related to a single topic throughout the three plus decades of this newsletter.

Amy E. Novick, Visiting Affiliate Librarian for Reference and Bibliographic Instruction, UGL

Book Review: What Else You Can Do With a Library Degree, ed. by Betty-Carol Sellen. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1980.

Betty-Carol Sellen conceived the book while bemoaning the scarcity of jobs for librarians. The problem, as she saw it, was that librarians, as a rule, narrowly define themselves not by their skills and abilities, but by where they work. She surveyed the bulletins of approximately 50 library schools, and found them to be guilty of perpetuating this definition by structuring their programs around and preparing their students for work in traditional libraries. Syracuse University, the sole exception, stresses development of the skills involved in being a librarian,

and encourages students to think in broader terms than just the academic, school, public, or special library.

Twenty years later one could argue that the majority of library schools at large research universities have followed the Syracuse approach. As these schools produce the librarians with doctoral degrees an increasing number of library school faculty have been schooled under the Syracuse model. I ask for responses to the veracity of this assumption and to the consequences of the predominance of the Syracuse model in the production of the next generation of professional library employees. Send responses to wilkersj@indiana.edu.