



Notes & Tracings

Newsletter of the Academic Section

Inside this issue:

LSU News	3
Louisiana Tech News	3
McNeese News	3
Southeastern News	4
UL Lafayette News	4
UNO News	4
Officers	5
Section Meeting Minutes	5

From the Chair by Michael Matthews

For those of you with travel funds (or credit cards), ALA in Chicago promises to be another extravaganza of sparkling speakers, useful workshops, and many meetings with old friends. The annual conference is the hallmark event for our profession, attracting over 20,000 people. This year's speakers roster boasts the talents of the writer Alice Walker, filmmaker and fabulist Oliver Stone, the venerable Congressman John Lewis, and technology guru Jaron Lanier. These are but the supernovas among a galaxy of lesser stars who will be lending their tacit endorsement to the notion that libraries are necessary cultural institutions, without which democracy would simply collapse. For a few brief days, we can count on being recognized for our contributions, even if the traditional emphasis has always been on "the library" and not on "the librarian." Melvil Dewey, who founded the ALA, never intended to represent the labor or status interests of librarians. The main purpose of the ALA was to provide a meeting venue for librarians who were low-paid but struggling members of the middle class who believed in the "social uplift" of the uneducated masses. The ALA was only one of many enterprises Dewey was running on a very narrow margin; others included the American Metric Bureau, the Spelling Reform Association, and the Readers and Writers Economy Company. These companies promoted Dewey's manifold social missions which he undertook with an evangelist's zeal. But while these dispensed good works, they were also intended to make money. Like many acquisitive Americans in the Progressive Era, Dewey balanced his Christian ideals against his desire to be rich man. Whether he was successful in this particular endeavor is a matter of personal interpretation.

Over a century later, the American Library Association, Dewey's "baby" as he once called it, is moving ever closer toward a corporate-style leadership. On March 18th, current ALA President Maureen Sullivan con-

(Continued on page 2)

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*Michael Matthews
chair*

From the Chair, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

tributed to the further disintegration of faculty-status for academic librarians when she tacitly concurred with the proposed elimination of tenure for the librarians of Eastern Carolina University by saying: "It's important to remember there is a difference between the work and role of the teaching faculty...and the work and role of librarians." (Please go to: <http://chronicle.com/article/As-Role-of-Librarians-Evolves/137937> for the full context.) Several academic librarians from the Louisiana chapter of ACRL confronted Sullivan and asked her to officially retract her comments, especially since she serves as the current ALA President and thereby speaks for **all** librarians, not just the administrators at ECU who employed her as a "consultant" to "reorganize" their library's faculty. She refused to retract her comments, but offered to post a statement of support for the ACRL/AAUP *Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians* on her presidential Facebook page. And, to her credit, she did; but the Facebook page is rarely visited and is not officially affiliated with ALA.

President Sullivan's undermining of faculty status for librarians is only the latest controversy in a pattern of activities that are quite revealing about ALA's increasingly corporate-style operations. After 9/11, the ALA leadership refused to take an unequivocal stand against the passage of the USA-PATRIOT Act. Instead of issuing a declaration against the loathsome tactics the PATRIOT Act enabled, ALA demurely posted links to other organizations such as the Electronic Privacy Information Center that informed our fellow citizens their borrowing records could be seized without a warrant. ALA President James Rettig (2008-2009) muzzled ALA councilors who openly objected to Governor Sarah Palin's censorship of library materials while she served as mayor of Wasila, Alaska. Rettig issued a dictum that stated such brazen defiance of a political figure could be interpreted as a violation of ALA's non-profit status.

Indeed, the ALA is a non-profit and thus tax-exempt organization. But it assiduously courts its patrons in the media and information services industries (Elsevier, SIRSI, Time-Warner, etc.) to provide, among other things, conference events that function as elaborate spectacles. An enormous amount of money is spent by these companies on advertising to the ALA membership at both the annual conferences and in the pages of *American Libraries*. This may explain why, in this age of massive media mergers, ALA has never issued a policy statement, or even a press release, on the inherent danger to democracy posed by powerful information conglomerates, such as Bertelsmann, Viacom, and Disney. (Hey, didn't we just have an annual conference in Anaheim?) ALA collects almost as much in conference fees as it does in membership fees. And as membership dwindles with more retirements, we can expect advertising revenue to eventually take the lead in the ALA accounts ledger. And what will happen then? Instead of paying membership fees will we buy shares instead?

As ALA members, we must keep all this in mind as we ride up the escalators in Chicago to our next lunch meeting in a well-appointed room, or as we get that tingling sense of satisfaction from hearing a celebrity sing the praises of our profession. ALA must always answer to its membership, and we should hold it accountable for its actions, omissions, and occasional lies. I like to think that Melvil Dewey, after listening to a Baptist sermon on a crisp Sunday morning in Albany, would have wanted it that way.

Library news from around the state

Louisiana State University

Jennifer Cargill, Dean of the LSU Libraries, retired on February 28, 2013. **Elaine Smyth** (formerly Interim Assistant Dean) was named Interim Dean of the LSU Libraries and **Lois Kuyper-Rushing** (Head of Music Resources) was named Interim Assistant Dean of the LSU Libraries.

Sigrid Kelsey, Electronic Reference Services and Web Development Coordinator, presented "Catholic Library World: Behind the Scenes," at the Catholic Library Association 2013 Convention, Houston, TX, April 4, 2013.

Lois Kuyper-Rushing, Interim Assistant Dean, published "Reassessing Eugène Bozza: Discoveries in the Bibliothèque Municipale de Valenciennes Archive." *Notes* 69: issue 4 (June, 2013), 706-720.

Mikel Ledee was named Supervisor of Music Resources on March 1, 2013.

EXHIBIT NEWS:

"The Summer of 1863: Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Port Hudson," June 17 - September 7, 2013. In commemoration of the sesquicentennial anniversary of these strategically significant events, this small exhibition includes materials in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections that reflect on the sieges at Port Hudson and Vicksburg, and the Battle of Gettysburg. Special Collections maintains vast holdings of Civil War-related materials (particularly regarding this region); the items on display are merely a sample of the wealth of resources available for research on the topic.

Louisiana Tech University

Lynell Buckley, Head of Reference, has received a \$5000 grant from the Lagniappe Ladies philanthropic group for the purchase of books in the field of Liberal Arts.

Rita Franks is the new Head of Collection Services.

McNeese State University

Debbie Johnson-Houston, Director, attended the OCLC Global Council Spring Meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, April 22-26 2013, as OCLC Global Council Delegate (Americas Region). The Council met in The Hague, Netherlands, to discuss the opportunities and challenges libraries face in an increasingly global environment and the importance of international cooperation. It was the first OCLC Global Council meeting to take place outside the United States or Canada.

Library news from around the state

Southeastern Louisiana University

Paul Kelsey, Head of Acquisitions, was appointed as a member of the Duke University Press Library Advisory Board on February 18, 2013. Paul was featured as the ACRL Member of the Week, May 13, 2013. The link to his interview is posted at the ACRL web site, <http://www.acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider/archives/7233>. Paul was also the recipient of the 2012 Scholastic Library Publishing Award, which was presented by ALA President Molly Raphael on June 24, 2012, at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim. Several press releases were written about the award, and he was featured in the "ALA Award Winners Visionaries & Innovators" article in *American Libraries* (September/October 2012). Paul made the following presentations:

"An Introduction to Patron Driven Acquisitions" and "Launch Pad: Where Young Authors and Illustrators Take Off" at the Louisiana Library Association Annual Conference, March 8, 2013.

"Patron-Driven Acquisitions," at the National Catholic Educators Association/Catholic Library Association Annual Convention, April 4, 2013.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Sherry Curry, Head of Web & IT Services, and **Emily Deal**, Distance Learning & Virtual Services Librarian, presented, "Dupré Library Services for Online Learning: Expanding Educational Opportunities in a Changing Environment," for the Academic Discussion Group on April 16. The group is affiliated with UL Lafayette.

Louisiana Room Librarian **Jean Kiesel** and Library Specialist **Jane Vidrine** recently signed a contract with Arcadia Publishing to write a book on Evangeline Parish for Arcadia's Images of America series.

Susan Richard, Associate Dean of University Libraries, and **Betsy Miguez**, Assistant Dean of Public Services, received \$11,075 to implement a Student Technology Enhancement Program grant, "Edith Garland Dupré Library: Charging Stations for Laptops & Mobile Devices."



University of New Orleans

Sharon Mader, Dean of Library Services, was recently selected as one of four new presenters for the ACRL workshop, "Planning, Assessing, and Communicating Library Impact: Putting the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education into Action." The day-long Standards workshop is led by expert presenters at locations across the country. The workshop curriculum is designed to support librarians in applying the **Standards for Libraries in Higher Education** at their institutions.

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NOTES & TRACINGS

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Academic Section Business Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 7, 2013

4:00p.m. - 5:45p.m.

Hilton Capital Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Melinda F. Matthews, Secretary

Michael Matthews, Chair of the Louisiana Library Association Academic Section, brought the meeting of the Louisiana Library Association Academic Section to order at 4:00 pm, March 7, 2013, in the Victory Room at the Louisiana Library Association Conference at the Hilton Capitol Center in Baton Rouge.

An election transpired where Patricia Brown stated she will serve as Academic Section Chair Elect. Melinda F. Matthews said she will serve as Secretary again. Neil Guilbeau is Chair.

Karen Niemla, President of ACRL-LA, conversed about ACRL-LA workshops. Gena Chattam discussed articles on Facebook. Stephanie Braunstein, Carla Clark, and Beth Paskoff talked about BESE and school librarians.

A door prize of a free book dinner ticket was awarded to Abigail DeSoto, LSU SLIS student, by Karen Niemla.

The meeting adjourned with the LLA Academic Section/ACRL-LA Meet and Greet including soft drinks, nuts, cookies, and brownies from 5:00p.m. - 5:45p.m.

