We take your order, you take control.

TRACK YOUR ORDER, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

When it comes to the status of your purchase, Emery-Pratt is up-to-the-minute and always available. You receive the latest information on your order as soon as we do. You then decide how your order reports are arranged and supplied to you, either alphabetically by author or title, or numerically by your purchase order number. Last, you tell us whether you wish to receive your detailed reports via fax or e-mail each week. You can even check the status of your order 24 hours a day at www.emery-pratt.com at no cost to you. Then, if you still need additional information, just call our customer service department toll-free and let an Emery-Pratt representative give you the answers.

Every personalized order and status report includes:

- Your purchase order number
- The author, title and quantity of each book ordered
- Your order status, including any restrictions, cancellations or advisories

Emery-Pratt®

Book Distributors since 1873

1966 West M-21, Owosso, MI 48867-1397
Phone (toll-free) 1 800 248-3887
Fax (toll-free) 1 800 523-6379
E-mail: mail@emery-pratt.com
Internet: www.emery-pratt.com

5788

THE NICEST PEOPLE IN THE BOOK BUSINESS

Random Ramblings — Why Aren't Faculty Complaining about Academic Libraries Not Buying Books?

Column Editor: **Bob Holley** (Professor, Library & Information Science Program, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202; Phone: 248-547-0306; Fax: 313-577-7563) <aa3805@wayne.edu>

I don't understand why book-oriented faculty aren't raising more of a stink about the changing patterns in collection development. Most academic research libraries have drastically reduced their purchases of scholarly monographs as online resources of all types have taken an increasing percentage of the collection development budget. I started my career when the rule of thumb was 60% for serials and 40% for books. A quick calculation from the **ARL** statistics for 2007-2008 on monographs expenditures as a percentage of total library materials expenditures showed that the median percentage is 21% with a range from 6% to 43%. For my own institution, **Wayne State University**, the percentage is 13%, a fact that influenced my choosing this topic. I suspect that this percentage is now even less as most libraries have lost purchasing power during the recent economic difficulties.

I had expected these faculty, mostly in the Humanities and some of the Social Science disciplines, to be concerned about this decline in book purchases. The common wisdom holds that many faculty still need books for their research since a full discussion of many topics requires more extensive discourse than a journal article. These faculty should also be concerned that the decline in book sales will lead to fewer books being accepted for publication, mostly by university presses, because most publishers expect to sell a certain number of copies to justify selecting a manuscript for publication. Faculty who publish in less popular areas and niche topics will be most affected and may encounter increasing difficulty in getting promoted without the "tenure" book. A third reason, perhaps overlooked by some faculty, is that their students still need books to complete the assignments for their courses.

While I don't have a definite answer to the question that I'm asking in this column, I have several plausible hypotheses. The first is that perhaps faculty, contrary to the common wisdom, are making less use of published books. Statistics show that book circulation is declining overall in research libraries. As will be seen later, this reduction could mean that faculty are obtaining their books from other sources; but it could also mean that they are depending more upon journal articles and perhaps on substantive book-like materials available on the Internet as well as blogs, discussion lists, personal emails, and other similar Web forms of publication. The greater use of URL's instead of print sources in bibliographies lends some credibility to this hypothesis.

The trend toward patron driven acquisitions of all types is another possibility. Faculty aren't complaining about the lack of books because the library is purchasing the books that they want or are getting them quickly enough through interlibrary loan. According to the circumstances, these purchases could be through the conventional book jobbers, the out-of-print book market, print on demand, or eBooks. This library strategy is therefore based upon satisfying the most powerful library clientele by giving them what they need when they want it. As an administrator, I have sympathy for this decision; but it is based a bit upon the "I'm all right, Jack" theory of library service since it may overlook the other key group of users, students. When I was discussing this issue in my collection development class last semester, one bright student asked about how this policy will affect the procrastinating student who

continued on page 62

Random Ramblings
from page 61

needs a book the week before the term paper is due. A few years ago, it would have normally been in the collection "just in case." Now, the deadline is too close to get the book "just in time," especially since students seldom receive the priority processing commonly reserved for faculty requests.

The next explanation was the subject of my presentation at the **2010 Charleston Conference**. Faculty may be purchasing their own books because doing so is simpler than asking the library to do so. With a wide choice of online booksellers, faculty can easily find and order materials much more easily than in the days of physical bookstores. In addition, competition in the out-of-print book market has reduced the prices for many publications to the point that buying a personal copy has become much less expensive. Anecdotally, a faculty member in one of my liaison areas told me that she never uses the library because she buys all the books she needs. After giving this talk, which was a prelude to a more formal study, I was surprised at the support for my hypothesis that some faculty are asking the library to purchase only expensive items and those that are difficult to obtain from online booksellers.

My final explanation is that faculty in the disciples most likely to be supported by books are discouraged enough that they no longer think that complaining is worth the effort. With this year's 20% success rate of getting a tenured position in the Humanities, with the traditionally lower salaries, with the lack of outside grant funding and the perks that this support brings, they may be happy enough to have a full-time tenured or tenure track position. Not finding the books that they need in the library may be a trivial concern as Humanities faculty look at the dismemberment of departments at universities like the **University of New York at Albany**. (*http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/10/04/albany*) Non-tenured faculty may be less likely to rock the boat even as they have greater need for books to complete the research needed for tenure.

While the lack of faculty complaints may make life easier for library directors, I worry that faculty silence is one more sign of the diminished importance of academic libraries. Raised voices in the academic senate, picketing the administration building, and letters to the editor for increased library funding might not lead to more money but would show that some faculty still care about the library.

Papa Abel Remembers — The Tale of A Band of Booksellers, Fasicle 14: KATINA TO GIVE TITLE

by **Richard Abel** (Aged Independent Learner) <reabel@q.com>

Earlier an account of the Copenhagen presentation to Scandinavian librarians was related. The same presentation was offered in London several weeks later to a group of about 50 UK university and research library librarians organized by **Tom Slatner**, then running the London office. **Tom** had enlisted **Maurice Line**, then director of the **British Library** subsidiary responsible for collecting all the scholarly journals and books and reproducing them in support of the Library's international inter-library loan service, to chair the meeting. (The London office was supplying all the non-UK, English-language books to **Maurice's** library.) But there was a surprise laying in wait — **Maurice** had invited **Julian Blackwell** to the presentation. I had no option but to lay out in considerable detail the firm's systems, having learned of **Julian's** presence only upon arriving at the room — that after all, was the point of the gathering. That a major competitor, who was having difficulty bringing up the systems to support a comparable offering, would have detailed account of the firm's systems and their capabilities was entirely beside the point — so, off I went on another six-hour presentation.

The session broke for lunch a little before noon. **Maurice** had, unknown to me, arranged that he, **Julian**, and I, were to go off to a different restaurant for lunch. I didn't know, and don't know today, if some sort of confrontation was expected or some other purpose was to be served. Whatever, in the course of lunch, I decided to make a proposal of a very different nature. I suggested to **Julian** that I would welcome the opportunity to sit down with him and his brother **Richard** to discuss the possibility of somehow merging our firms. I pointed out that each outfit had a great deal to offer the world of knowledge creation and distribution. But that in a genuine sense we were both wasting management time and resources in our worldwide competition. I advanced the notion that some sort of an equitable merger could not but prove a more powerful vehicle for carrying forward this cultural responsibility. I knew that the **Blackwells** were as committed to the cultural role of the distribution of knowledge and the stimulus thereof to new knowledge creation (ala **Karl Popper**) as were our band of Argonauts. He indicated that he would carry this message back. But I heard nothing further for some years when I learned that he had not sent his memo to **Richard** or the **Blackwell** board. Too bad! What might have emerged from such a joining of forces can still not be divined.

In the several weeks between these two presentations I had had much time in quiet evenings in hotel rooms to further reflect upon the meaning of these sessions and intervening mini-repeats to other librarians and publishers in Europe. I was particularly struck by the degree and extent into which I had fallen into the information trap. I, together with the entire band of Argonauts, had entered the game as bibliophiles and scientiaphils (the latter a neologism invented for the immediate purposes herein) but we were submerged in specific bits of information. It was true that we still dealt with books, the "violls" (to use **Milton's** apt phrase) of knowledge, but their essence had been subsumed within the continuing focus on programs and systems dealing with their control as objects rather than violls of hard-won knowledge. The only knowledge to be found in this welter data and technical information was the over-arching design of the system and its components — and more importantly the understanding of what the entire construct was meant to do. I, for example, no longer studied publishers' catalogs or subject bibliographies, together with the office managers I no longer selected books to fulfill a variety of users' needs. Almost all the Argonauts were now setting up networks to couple the firm's systems to library needs. I hardly knew what was being published so I might add to the library that I had long planned to occupy my advanced years. A massive unforeseen consequence indeed.

Whatever, I returned to Portland to take up the tasks of getting a new building up and planning its layout. To this end meetings with the managers of each of the individual operating sections were conducted to solicit their sense of the amounts of space and other facilities each would require to not only carry on their functions effectively but to provide for future growth. When these individual plans were in hand collective meetings of all the managers were mounted to plan the co-ordination and resulting physical relations were held to optimize the flow of books, cataloging, processing, and related functions. It took about six months to gather and integrate this information. Thereupon a rough layout, reflecting dimensions as well as operating relationships, was created. This layout was then taken to an architect from whom final construction drawings were duly received.

In the meantime, **Keith Barker** had been looking for a site of sufficient acreage to accommodate this building somewhat larger than two football fields placed side-by-side, plus another future building of the same size to accommodate growth, landscaped parking segments, and well landscaped grounds. The aim was to present a handsome campus to passersby and pleasant grounds for the staff in good weather. He located such a site of about twenty-five acres in semi-rural setting with good transportation access. And with that

continued on page 63