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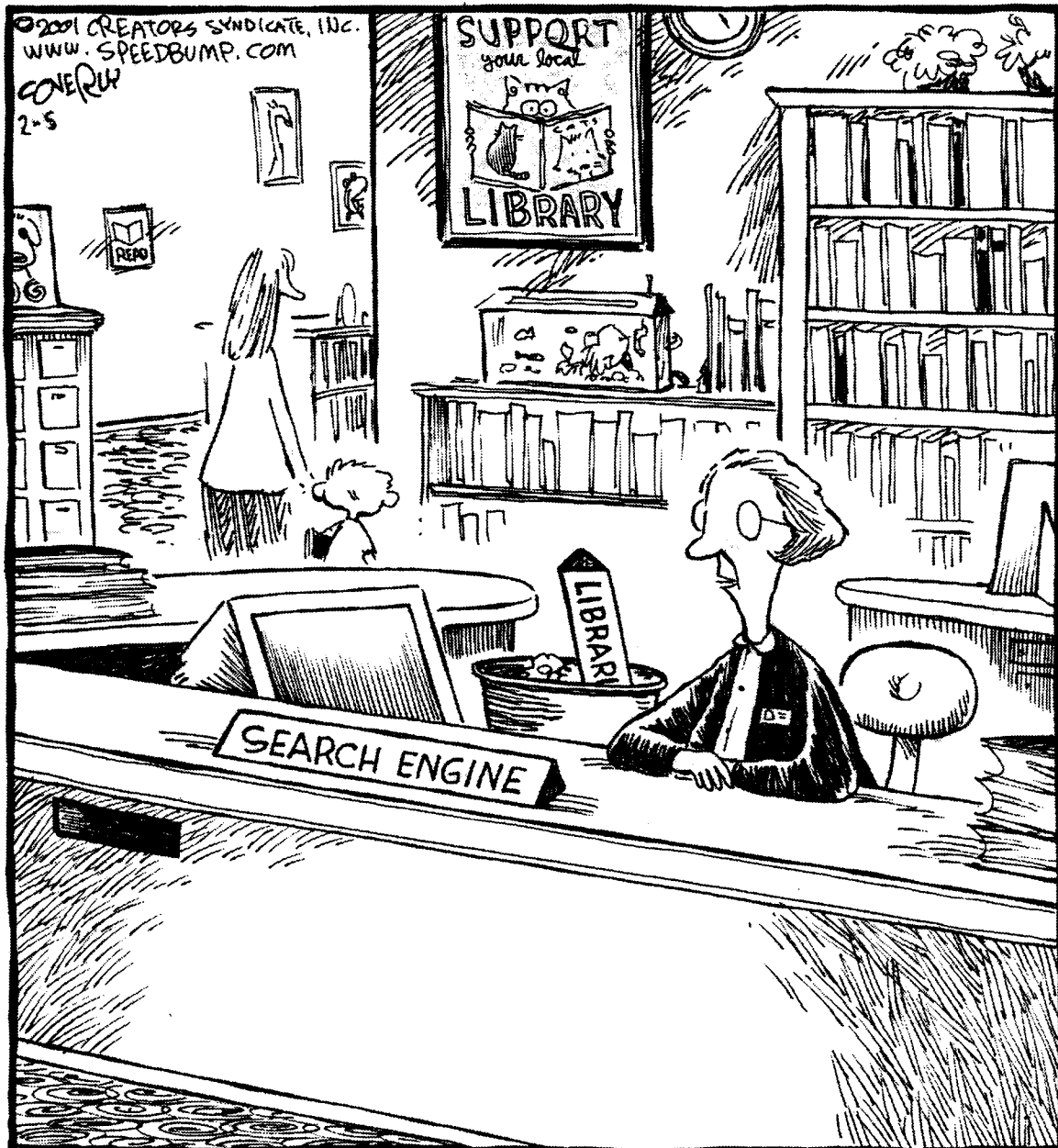
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U*N*A*B*A*S*H*E*D™

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Librarian

the "how I run my library good" letter sm



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pennies.

3. If the numbers before AND after the decimal point are the same, shelve alphabetically by the letters below them.

391.103	391.103	391.103
SA	SM	TY

That's all there is to it. Sorting by the Dewey Decimal System may take a little getting used to, but I've found it much easier when looking at it in terms of dollars (before the decimal point) and pennies (after the decimal point).

Also check out: Dewey Decimal Classification System
<http://www.tnrplib.bc.ca/dewey.html>
 and The Consumer Health Information Service: List of Dewey Decimal Classification Numbers for Books <http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/TRL/centres/chis/ddsubj99.html>

BERMAN'S BAG: THE TOP CENSORED LIBRARY STORIES OF 1998/2000, by Sanford Berman, U*L Contributing Editor

Since 1976, Project Censored, founded by Carl Jensen at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California, has diligently (and appallingly) identified critical public issues and events that mainstream media either underreported or failed to report at all. In that same spirit and format, these are stories that the orthodox library press--most notably *American Libraries* and *Library Journal*--altogether ignored or minimized, even though they dealt with clearly significant professional matters. And it's not that AL and LJ didn't know about these things. They did. Fortunately, other sources recog-

nized the importance of these challenges and developments, but their reports and analyses hardly reached the substantial readership commanded by the two leading journals.

1. HEIGHT-SHELVING PROPOSED BY LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

Synopsis: James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, hoping to save space in LC's Capitol Hill collections, announced a plan to shelve books there *by height*, which would effectively eliminate useful browsing by reference librarians and scholars, and might well be disastrously cypocatted throughout the library community. Billington apparently believes that everything will ultimately be digitized and available on the tube so why bother about shelving the physical volumes in any classified order? And he also seems to suffer from the delusion that standard, LC-type cataloging is so adequate, so functional, that relevant, wanted materials can be easily and confidently discerned through the catalog. Every LC professional organization openly opposed this potentially precedent setting, wrong-headed idea. And critiques appeared in several "alternative" media, resulting in the proposal being put "on hold."

Sources: Thomas Mann, *Height Shelving Threat to the Nation's Libraries* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Professional Guild, AFSCME 2910, 1999), reprinted in *Counterpoise*, v. 3, nos. 3/4 (July/Oct. 1999), p. 19-38, and *Alternative Library Literature*, 1998/1999 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000), p. 338-56; Sanford Berman, "Keep It Classed!," *ibid.*, p. 337; Grace Palladino, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Shelving by Height at the Library of Congress," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, v. 45, no. 40 (June 11, 1999), p. B6-7; "Good Reasons To Oppose Height-Shelving at LC," *Bulle-*

tin Board: the Voice of the Library of Congress Professional Guild, AFSCME 2910, December 6, 1999, p. 3, reprinted in *The U*N*A*B*A*S*H*E*D Librarian™*, no. 114 (2000), p. 13; Robert Anderson, "Research Collection Shelved by Subject--an Endangered Species?," *LG Communicator*, v. 33, nos. 4/5 (July/October 1999), p. 16-17.

2. THE WEEDING EPIDEMIC. IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES

Synopsis: Discarding damaged or truly obsolete library materials is a practical necessity, but lately--in part flowing from a reigning mentality that deemphasizes print and AV, in favor of purely digital resources--there's been a virtual epidemic of trashing, hiding, or selling arguably historic and valuable items without proper review or consultation. At San Francisco Public Library, for example, an expensive new downtown building was constructed with ample accommodation for computer terminals but hugely insufficient shelf space for books, resulting in thousands of volumes (some estimates suggest half-a-million!) being unceremoniously and often secretly pulped or remotely stored. Variations of this frequently appearance- or circulation-driven practice are now so common that a Midwest library user was even prompted to write a scorching poem in California's *Anderson Valley Advertiser*.

Sources: Fred Whitehead, "'To Thine Own Shelves Be True': a Call for a Working Group in Defense of Library Collections," *People's Culture*, no. 37 (1997), p. 1-2, reprinted in *Alternative Library Literature, 1996/1997* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1998), p. 180-81; Fred Woodworth, "Report from Arizona," *People's Culture*, no. 37 (1997), p. 3-5, reprinted in *Alternative Library Literature, 1996/1997*, p. 182-83; Clark Dissmeyer, "Public

Library, R.I.P.," *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, v. 47, no. 26 (June 30, 1999), reprinted in *Alternative Library Literature, 1998/1999* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000), p. 86; Fred Whitehead, "Update on Library Collections," *People's Culture*, new series no. 42 (1997), reprinted in *Alternative Library Literature, 1998/1999*, p. 87-89; Bill Witherup, "The Burning of the Books: 2000 A.D.," *People's Culture*, new series no. 42 (1997), reprinted in *Alternative Library Literature, 1998 1999*, p. 90; Fred Woodworth, "One of the Strange Features of Life and Civilization," *Mystery & Adventure Review*, no. 34 (Summer 1998), p. 4-7, reprinted in *Alternative Library Literature, 1998/1999*, p. 91-94; Mark Campos, "The Wishing Ring" (comic strip), *Exapno Mapcase*, no. 2 (1998), reprinted in *Alternative Library Literature, 1998/1999*, p. 95-99.

3. FREE SPEECH FOR LIBRARIANS

Synopsis: Early in March 1999, hoping to prevent other colleagues from undergoing the same denial of on-the-job intellectual freedom that I was experiencing at Hennepin County Library, I proposed this resolution to the American Library Association Council:

WHEREAS the American Library Association is firmly committed to human rights and freedom of expression (Policies 53 and 58.4.1); and

WHEREAS candid, robust debate is essential to the making of sound policy; and

WHEREAS library staff do not universally enjoy the right to openly discuss library and professional issues without fear of reprisal;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that ALA Council amends the Library Bill of

Rights (53.1) by adding:

7) Libraries should permit and encourage a full and free expression of views by staff on professional and policy matters.

On Tuesday, June 29th, in New Orleans, ALA Council overwhelmingly voted to refer the amendment to its Committee on Professional Ethics. As I feared, that referral effectively killed any possibility of amending the Library Bill of Rights. Indeed, the Ethics Committee subsequently determined that workplace free speech was already addressed by ALA's Code of Ethics, opting simply to draft a clarifying document, "Questions and Answers on Librarian Speech in the Workplace;" presumably to be presented to Council for approval. In a "brief reply" (12-18-00), I remarked that "while it may be a reasonable statement (with certain noted reservations) on how things are, it does not ringingly declare--as only an amendment to the Library Bill of Rights could--how things should be, unequivocally establishing as professional philosophy and principle that library staff ought to enjoy the right to full and free expression of views on professional and policy matters." I concluded that "despite the admonition to library administrators (pages 3-4) to encourage staff input and discussion, the document frankly appears to be a manifesto supporting 'managerial prerogatives,' not free speech." Neither *AL* nor *LJ* traced or commented upon the tortured history of the original resolution and its abject fate, even though the issue is central to librarianship itself.

Sources: Sanford Berman, "Rights or Ethics?" (letter), *American Libraries*, September 1999, p. 40, reprinted as "An Open Letter to ALA Members," *Alternative Library Literature*, 1998/

1999, p. 85; letter from Sanford Berman to Charles Harmon, 5-3-00; "Draft ALA Committee on Professional Ethics Minutes, 2000 Midwinter Conference, San Antonio, TX," p. 7-11; letter from Charles Harmon to Sanford Berman, 12-14-00, with 5-page "Draft Questions & Answers on Librarian Speech in the Workplace"; letter from Sanford Berman to Charles Harmon, 12-18-00; John Buschman/Mark Rosenzweig, "Intellectual Freedom Within the Library Workplace: an Exploratory Study in the U.S.," *Journal of Information Ethics*, v. 8, no. 2 (Fall 1999), p. 36-45.

4. BIBLIOPHILES AND LIBRARY LOVERS OPPOSE SFPL BOND ISSUE.

Synopsis: A committed band of citizen activists and watchdogs, led by James Chaffee and Peter Warfield, unsuccessfully--albeit energetically--tried to sink the San Francisco Public Library's Fall 2000 quest for over \$105,000,000 to ostensibly "improve" library branches. Save Our Libraries--No On Prop. A argued, in effect, that the SFPL management and Foundation had badly mismanaged earlier bond issues, made fraudulent claims regarding such matters as earthquake risks, seemed to be promoting the privatization and corporatization of library service, and just couldn't be trusted to responsibly and efficiently handle the wanted funds.

Sources: Gray Brechin, "SF Hoodwinked on Library" (letter), *Bay Area Reporter*, v. 30, no. 42 (19 October 2000); James Chaffee, "Library Privatization Concerns" (letter), *Independent*, October 21, 2000; various press releases and manifestoes, some reprinted as "San Francisco Public Library: the Fight Against the Bond Issue in the 2000 Election," *Librarians at Liberty*, v. 8, nos. 1/2 (December 2000), p. 1, 3-7.

5. LC DOES COKE

Synopsis: As another troubling instance of a now-"normal" trend--the commercialization of libraries--the Library of Congress in late December 2000 not merely accepted a gift of some 20,000 Coca-Cola TV commercials (which would have been unexceptional), but shamelessly conducted a PR extravaganza for the pop-maker within LC's hallowed halls. Police ejected protesters who questioned the propriety of a public institution shilling for a "junk food pusher" which incidentally had just agreed to pay millions to settle a suit contending it had discriminated against Black employees. While *AL* noted the donation, neither major library periodical reported on the protest or editorialized on the menace of commercialism and the cascading erosion of library "neutrality."

Source: Russell Mokhiber/Robert Weissman, "The Real Thing: Democracy As a Contact Sport," reprinted from the Focus on the Corporation Internet Column (<http://www.corporatepredators.org>) in *Library Juice*, 4:1 (January 3, 2001), p. 6-8.

Sanford Berman, U*L Contributing Editor

BOOK REVIEW: LIBRARIANS IN FICTION

Burns, Grant. *Librarians in Fiction: A Critical Bibliography*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1998.

Grant Burns reviews 226 novels, 104 short stories, and 13 plays, all of which feature at least one librarian in a significant role. He also reviews 31 secondary sources (books and articles). Judging from Burns' source list, this bibliography is unique in the English language as one that provides descriptions of a fairly extensive catalog. His writing is

good, if a trifle superior & anglicized, but I was shocked to discover that no special effort was made--or at least noted as having been made--to include works by or about people of color. There is not much on homosexual relationships, either. It is stunning that the book made it through the having-friends-and-colleagues-reading-the-manuscript and the publication processes without someone demanding accountability on the diversity front.

Despite Burns's lack of attention to multiculturalism, he gives some indication of leftist leanings in his reviews. He points out at least a dozen titles that address proletarian, feminist, Native American, democratic, civil rights, and, of course, censorship concerns. Quoting the review for Janet Fairbank's *Rich Man, Poor Man* "...librarian who is involved in Progressive politics, was a suffragist, a pacifist, and a campaigner for 'the rights of people.' Minimal library scenes, but 'it's nice to see a librarian taking on the big political issues of the time.'" Other than the egregious exclusions already cited, the book does a good job of representing a wide range of titles. Incorporated are 19th and 20th century items from both eastern and western countries. Types of libraries and librarians encountered include, in addition to school, public and academic:

- Private
- Embassy, court, government and royal
- Researchers-for-hire
- Medical
- Family (curator) and archives
- Post-apocalypse
- Research and psychic research
- Music and opera
- Subscription
- Erotica collection
- Literary & scientific society
- Factory
- Prison