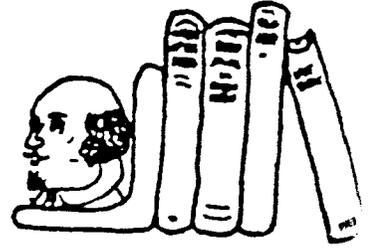


BIBLIO-NOTES



THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE ACRL ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE DISCUSSION
GROUP
NUMBER 17, WINTER 1990

Midwinter Meeting Information
Chicago

The general meeting for the Discussion Group at Midwinter ALA is Sunday, January 13, from 9:30-12:30 AM. The location has not been announced. The first hour will be devoted to business. The agenda will include:

- 1) 1991 Program--Loss Glazier
- 2) 1992 Program--Candace R. Benefiel
- 3) By-laws revision
- 4) MLA News--Elaine Franco
- 5) MLA Questionnaire--Loss Glazier
- 6) Publication of program papers
- 7) New Business

The second hour will be devoted to two short discussions: small presses and libraries facilitated by Loss Glazier, and the image of subject specialists facilitated by William Baker.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

Come one, come all! Monday, January 14 (location TBA) 2:00-4:00 the program committee will be meeting to further refine plans for the 1992 program. Any interested parties may contact Candace Benefiel, Texas A&M University.

1991 Program, Atlanta

CONTEMPORARY POETRY IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES

This program will cover contemporary poetry and its relation to the library. Topics covered will include poetry collections, decisions about which poetries are appropriate for a collection and sources for their acquisition, the social significance of poetry collection, and the relationship between library poetry collections and the community.

"American Literary Collections since 1950"

Dr. Robert J. Bertholf, Curator, Poetry/Rare Books, State University of New York, Buffalo

Experimentation and Politics: the Sociology of Contemporary Literature"

Dr. Hank Lazer, Professor, Department of English, University of Alabama

Poetry, Libraries, and the Community: the Pueblo Poetry Project"

Tony Moffeit, Assistant Director, University Library, University of Southern Colorado and Poet-in-Residence, University of Southern Colorado.

A fourth speaker will be announced.

For further information, please contact Loss Glazier, Lockwood Library, SUNY, Buffalo, NY 14260, (716) 636-2817.

ACRL-MLA Joint Project Announced

I recently received a letter from Cathleen Bourdon, Acting Executive Director of ACRL, concerning a proposed joint project with the Modern Language Association, the text of which follows.

--The Editor

ACRL and the RASD Reference Tools Advisory Committee have been invited to participate in a project with the Modern Language Association and I write to encourage your involvement. There will be a meeting at Midwinter (Saturday, January 12, 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) to discuss this project, and if your unit is interested, please encourage your members to come to the meeting.

MLA is interested in conducting an examination of the coverage and overlap of the MLA Bibliography and other reference works. Daniel Uchitelle, the director of the Center for Information Services at MLA, approached ACRL and RASD with a request for assistance. He wrote,

"Our interest in coverage and overlap between the Bibliography and other reference works is motivated by our desire to discover whether there are additional subject areas within the scope of the Bibliography into which we should expand (for example, Middle Eastern literature) or areas which we have been covering which we should relinquish to other publications that may already be doing a better job of providing information in those specific areas.

"I believe that this project lends itself well to ACRL member participation. It does not require a high level of experience with our internal indexing and production systems. Rather, it requires participants to have a broad knowledge of published reference works and the ability to analytically compare scope, depth and completeness between one work and another. For that, I believe, we need librarians."

To begin work on the project, ACRL will form a committee called the "MLA Bibliography Scope and Overlap Committee." It will be co-chaired by Elaine Franco and Eva Sartori. The members of the committee will be those individuals who agree to work on the project. The number of committee members has not been set but will be somewhere between

10 and 20. As Mr. Uchitelle writes,

"A committee could be formed of interested participants who would divide the Bibliography into units based on our subject classification categories. Participants would choose a classified category in which they had expertise (hopefully more than one participant per category), and would then undertake a detailed examination of the extent and nature of coverage of that area in the Bibliography versus other currently-available reference works. In addition, some areas not currently covered by the Bibliography, such as Middle Eastern literature, would also be examined. Once the examination was completed, participants would write a report for each classified section describing their findings. These reports would then be discussed by the committee as a whole, and a comprehensive set of recommendations would be formulated to help guide the MLA in focusing its indexing resources more effectively."

The goal is to have the project completed by November 1, 1991.

Please share information on this project with your colleagues. For more information, contact me or the committee co-chairs:

Elaine Franco, Cataloging Department, Shields Library, University of California, Davis, CA 95616-5292, (916)752-9860.

Eva Sartori, Central Reference Services, 203B Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0410, (402)472-6987.

IRISH MUSIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

Laura Fuderer has published a catalog to accompany an exhibit of a special collection on Irish music in the Department of Special Collections at the University of Notre Dame. The title is Music Mad--Captain Francis O'Neill and Traditional Irish Music: An Exhibition from the Captain Francis O'Neill Collection of Irish Music, March 1990-August 1990. Please drop her a note if you would like a free copy. Laura Fuderer, Rare Books Librarian, Special Collections, 102 Hesburgh Library, University Libraries of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5629, (219)239-5252.

ACRL English and American Literature
Discussion Group

MLA on CD-ROM -- Concerns

Survey

This survey is in response to a number of concerns with MLA on CD-ROM voiced by librarians at the Midwinter 1990 meeting of the ACRL English and American Literature Discussion Group in Chicago. The Group decided that concerns with this system were significant. Since improvements have not occurred expeditiously, it was decided that a letter of concern be sent to MLA by the Group.

This survey is being sent so that as many ACRL librarians as possible may provide information about their own specific concerns. Please attach as many additional sheets as necessary and, where relevant, support your concerns with printouts from the database.

Respondent _____

Institution _____

Phone _____

Qualitative Data

1. Do you own MLA on CD-ROM? yes _____ no _____

2. If your library has not purchased the system, why not?

3. How would you rate overall user satisfaction with the system?

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor

Comments:

4. How would you rate overall librarian satisfaction with the system?

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor

Comments:

5. How would you rate Wilson's software with the the system?

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor

Comments:

6. How would you rate overall MLA's indexing with the system?

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor

Comments:

7. How would you rate the quality of printed instructions with the system?

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor

Comments:

Specific Concerns

1. Please list specific concerns with Wilson's software as applied to MLA

A.

B.

C.

2. Please list specific concerns with the MLA database (include problems with initial articles, access points, level of indexing, etc. Please cite specific examples if possible. Feel free to support examples with printouts from the system).

A.

B.

C.

3. What problems have you encountered with downloading?

4. Please list other concerns not covered by the above categories.

5. Please list suggestions for improvement of the system.

Please return survey by February 14 to Loss Pequeno Glazier, Lockwood Library, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York, 14260. You may phone with questions about the survey at (716) 636-2817 or FAX (716) 636-3859.

GEORGE ELIOT NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE

One of our colleagues, Dr. William Baker of Northern Illinois University, wants to remind us that subscriptions to the George Eliot-George Henry Lewes Newsletter, a semi-annual publication, are available through him for \$6 per year. As stated on the first page of the September, 1990 issue, the newsletter is published "for the mutual benefit of those interested and actively engaged in working with either George Eliot, George Henry Lewes, or the relationship between them and their circle." The newsletter includes articles, reviews, and finding lists. Address inquiries to William Baker, University Libraries, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, IL, 60115.

Call for articles, letters, anything!

Do you have a brief article you'd like to see in print? An idea? A helpful citation?

Biblio-Notes is looking for a few good paragraphs, and we'd love to hear from you. Areas of primary interest to our readers include collection development, database searching, user education, reference work, and acquisitions and cataloging issues, as they relate to the field of English and American Literature.

Direct inquiries (or articles) to:

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Editor, Biblio-Notes
Reference Division
Sterling C. Evans Library
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-5000
(409)845-5741 Fax: (409)845-6238

LIFE AS AN MLA FIELD BIBLIOGRAPHER

Elaine A. Franco, University of California, Davis

I became a volunteer field bibliographer for the MLA International Bibliography in 1980 and began my work with the 1979 edition. I had two years of experience with a relatively simple process of preparing entries for the Bibliography before the new format that incorporated the CIFT classification system was introduced with the 1981 edition of the Bibliography. The "new" Bibliography is now almost ten years old and the Modern Language Association has appointed an Advisory Committee to the MLA Bibliography to examine the direction and philosophy of the Bibliography, to advise the staff on policies and procedures for compiling and producing the Bibliography, and to aid in identifying and recruiting bibliographers. As a current member of the Advisory Committee, I am interested in hearing what issues related to the Bibliography librarians want the Committee to address. I would also like more librarians to consider becoming bibliographers themselves.

Before CIFT (Contextual Indexing and Faceted Taxonomic Access System) was implemented, preparing an entry for the Bibliography demanded more attention to the details of bibliographical description than to subject analysis. As you will remember, the pre-1981 Bibliography provided a very broad classification system that typically categorized articles by century, national literature, and individual literary author. Aside from exceptions like

Shakespeare, the listings for individual literary authors did not receive a further breakdown by literary work. The general literature volume classified entries under broad topics, such as literary theory, but did not provide access to specific topics, such as deconstructionist literary theory. There were no subject indexes to the Bibliography. The author indexes covered the document authors only, not literary authors treated as subjects within the documents.

The CIFT system was phased in gradually. At first, bibliographers were not required to apply CIFT to all journal articles, so there was some unevenness in the level of subject analysis in the first editions using the new system. The CIFT thesaurus is maintained by MLA staff and is not directly accessible to the field bibliographers, who rely on the subject index volumes for guidance in assigning index terms. Terms assigned by field bibliographers are checked against the thesaurus and corrected as necessary by MLA staff. CIFT is meant to be open-ended. As bibliographers encounter seemingly unique topics, they are encouraged to record the terminology of the document itself. The new index terms will be changed only if the MLA staff determines that valid synonyms already appear in the thesaurus. Ideally CIFT allows for a dynamic classification system in which terms change as trends in scholarship change. In practice, CIFT can be very confusing for users. While the subject indexes are a guide to the index terms used in

the Bibliography, they cover only the terms used in that particular year. The complete thesaurus is not accessible to users (or to field bibliographers) at this time. CIFT has made the field bibliographers' work more complex, with the addition of detailed subject analysis for each bibliographic entry submitted. The MLA staff has held workshops at the MLA Annual Convention to assist bibliographers in the interpretation of CIFT. The Advisory Committee recommended that bibliographers receive more feedback from MLA on expectations and standards as well as more recognition from their academic institutions for their contributions to the Bibliography. The Advisory Committee also targeted academic librarians specializing in the areas covered by the Bibliography as ideal prospective field bibliographers. If you would like to volunteer, send a letter to Dennis Herron, Operations Manager, Center for Bibliographical Services, Modern Language Association, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981. The letter should include information on your areas of expertise and any special collections to which you have access. (Telephone: 212 614-6353.) Also feel free to contact me first if you have questions. I also welcome your input to the Advisory Committee to the Bibliography. The Committee meets each November and keeps in contact by mail throughout the year. My term on the Committee runs through 1992. I can be contacted as follows: Catalog Department; Shields Library; University of California, Davis; Davis, CA 95616-5292. Telephone: 916 752-9860.

EALDG 1990-91 OFFICERS

The results of last winter's election were announced at the Annual Meeting in Chicago, and steering committee members for 1990-91 are:

Chair:

Loss Pequeno Glazier
SUNY - Buffalo

Vice-Chair/Chair Elect:

Candace R. Benefiel
Texas A&M University

Secretary:

Tim Shipe
University of Iowa

Members at Large:

Michaelyn Burnette
University of California - Berkeley

Craig Likness
Trinity University

Rosamond Putzel
Rutgers University

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