

# Reflections on Cataloging Leadership

By Beth Picknally Camden, Sheila S. Intner, Janet Swan Hill, Regina R. Reynolds, and William A. Garrison

*Four Association for Library Collections & Technical Services leaders (Sheila S. Intner, Janet Swan Hill, Regina R. Reynolds, and William A. Garrison) reflect on their careers and offer insights in their paths to leadership positions in the professional and in the Association. A brief introduction by Beth Picknally Camden, program moderator, introduces the papers.*

## Introduction

By Beth Picknally Camden

The graying of the profession and looming retirements of baby boomers have been discussed with some frequency in recent years. Much of the focus has been on bringing new librarians into the profession. The need to hire into entry-level positions is paired with the need to fill leadership positions, both in our institutions and in our professional organizations. How can we inspire new and mid-career librarians to move into positions of leadership? How should we be mentoring potential leaders? The Cataloging & Classification Section (CCS) of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) sought to answer these questions by bringing together some of our current leaders to share insights and lessons learned in their careers. Their joint experience covers academic, special, and public libraries, as well as library schools. Among them are chairs of CCS and presidents of ALCTS. They have been active in standard development groups. They have expertise in metadata, cataloging and serials, and serve as administrators, practitioners, and professors.

The four speakers, whose papers are published here, reflected on their career paths, leaders who influenced and mentored them, and their paths to CCS and ALCTS involvement. They shared lessons that they had learned and addressed the question of what the future holds for cataloging leaders.

## Reflections on Cataloging Leadership

By Sheila S. Intner

Let me begin by giving you my short answers to the questions posed by the planners of this program. Then I'll provide highlights of my own personal experiences.

The announcement stated, "With the graying of the profession and looming retirements of baby-boomers, a new generation of cataloging leaders is needed. How should we mentor potential leaders?"

Here is what I believe the profession, which includes academic programs and organizations such as the ALCTS CCS, can do to mentor potential cataloging leaders:

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- Teach them the skills they need, including management, teaching, communication, persuasion, negotiation, motivation, budget, and writing skills.
- Provide opportunities in which they can learn to function in a real world setting under the guidance of master-catalogers, so their cataloging skills are honed effectively and they know what they are doing and why.
- Make appointment to committees a more orderly process that accommodates more people and do more for those who show an aptitude. The haphazard way things were done when I was chair of CCS and president of ALCTS allows good people to slip through the cracks or get disgusted and give up.

Here is what individuals can do:

- Love your job and show your enthusiasm for it!
- Be a good role model in terms of your participation in service activities, research, and writing for publication.

### My Personal Career Path

Except for a brief time immediately after graduation, my job was always broad and included management tasks as well as writing and publishing. I had to train staff, communicate complex information, work with vendors, represent my library to a library automation user group, write budgets and annual reports, and so on. I got into automation at the very beginning and learned to work with computers from the ground up.

Leaders who influenced me were the people who embraced the future and were at the helm of making it happen: Henriette Avram, Bob Hayes, Michael Gorman, Liz Bishoff, Marion Reid, and Jean Weihs. Several of these people later became my friends as well as colleagues.

To be frank (as I reflect on my involvement with CCS), I never got the position I truly wanted, which was to be a voting member of the Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA). Instead, I became chair of CCS and got to appoint people to CC:DA and the Subject Analysis Committee (SAC), and later became president of ALCTS and got to appoint the chair of Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information (MARBI) Committee, the ALA representative to the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of AACR2, the ALA representative to the Dewey Editorial Committee, and so on. That should have more than compensated me, but every once in a while, I still think wistfully how nice it would have been to have been on CC:DA.

### Advice to Potential Leaders

The advice that follows is not specific to me, but could be done by anyone.

- Work in leadership activities, such as standards-setting, teaching, and training.
- Learn how to do research that benefits your work life and publish the results. Publishing is key to being recognized, but you have to have something to say, first, which the research provides. One path is to earn a doctoral degree, because you have to conduct a proper research project and write a dissertation, although it is not the only way.
- Earn credentials that make you more effective in your job.
- Say “Yes” to opportunity, even if it means moving from your hometown, working longer hours, and taking more responsibility and bigger risks. Try for the things you genuinely want and do not be daunted if you do not get what you want the first time you try.
- Seek help and accept it (especially from family members, mentors, and teachers), but be careful of taking direction from people whose agenda you do not know. Always seek the “win-win” strategy, put yourself in the other person’s shoes, and be generous with praise and other rewards.
- Never lie. Earn the trust of those around you, those you teach, those you supervise, and those with whom you work. Always do what you promise and never leave colleagues in the lurch.

### A Winding Path to Cataloging Leadership

By Janet Swan Hill

Looking back over my career and trying to figure out why and how things turned out the way they did has been interesting. I have come up with the following list of circumstances, actions, and habits that I believe have been influential. You will notice that some of the items on my list are things over which none of us has any control.

- First, I had parents who always thought I could accomplish anything I set my mind to, with a father who instilled in me a belief that you do not have the right to complain about something if you are not also willing to do what is within your power to fix it.
- Second, I went to a women’s college. Obviously, for some people that simply is not an option. But at a women’s college, it tends to be assumed that women are capable of achieving great things, and of filling leadership roles. And as I have often pointed out,

Vassar most emphatically does not teach its students to shut up and sit down.

- Next, there is the accident of finding yourself in a place where interesting things are happening, and where there are interesting people working, and then combining it with the nonaccident of taking advantage of such circumstances.
- It helps to have people around you who are good examples, who can encourage you, appreciate what you accomplish, and who may also be able to put you in contact with useful people.
- It is valuable to develop a wide circle of acquaintances, and to be interested in things beyond a narrow specialty.
- You need to be willing to speak up in public, and preferably also be willing to “speak up” in writing through conducting and publishing research, thought, and opinion.
- Above all, you have to work. You need to be the sort of person who will volunteer, or accept an assignment, and be known as someone who will complete that assignment.
- Finally, I think you have to not care very much about your status or your influence, and instead to care about the work itself.

### My Career

Now, let me describe my career as it developed, so you can see why I identified these points as mattering. Before I start, however, let me admit that I am an organization wonk. At last count, I have served on 61 committees, boards, subcommittees, or task forces (15 as chair) in the ALCTS, the Map and Geography Round Table (MAGERT), and the American Library Association (ALA). I have been ALA’s representative to the Joint Steering Committee. I have been elected CCS Secretary and ALCTS president. I have been elected five times to ALA Council as a Councilor at Large, and once to ALA’s Executive Board. I am currently serving as one of ALA’s representatives to the Library of Congress (LC) Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control.

But I am an accidental librarian. I went to library school because my husband was drafted and sent to Vietnam and I needed something to occupy my mind. When I was about to finish my degree, I saw a posting for the LC Special Recruit program (later renamed Intern Program), and because we were planning to return to Washington, D.C., to live anyway, I applied. During the job interview, I was asked whether I would be likely to work for LC if I did not get into the recruit program and I said no. I would probably try to work for the United States Geological Society so I could do something closer to my undergraduate major of geology.

I am convinced that because of that answer I got into the program. As a special recruit, I spent three months at LC going from department to department, meeting all kinds of people, and getting a taste of all kinds of work.

Afterwards I took a permanent position in the Geography and Map Division as a cataloger. This was at a time that map cataloging standards were in active evolution, so within just a few years I was involved in the development of AACR2’s chapter for maps and in editing the revision of the portion of the G classification schedule that covers maps and atlases; I also compiled LC’s map cataloging manual.

When my husband took a job in Chicago, I applied for a job that happened to be open at Northwestern University, using contacts from LC as references, including Bill Welch, the Deputy Librarian of Congress, and Ben Tucker, the Principal Descriptive cataloger. I got the job as head of Cataloging at Northwestern and, to my great good fortune, went to work for Karen Horny, who was head of Technical Services and just happened to be president-elect of the Resources and Technology Division (RTSD), now ALCTS.

### Contributions to the Profession

With Karen Horny’s encouragement, I shifted my focus from the Special Library Association to the ALA, and volunteered for committee work in the RTSD CCS. Nancy Williamson, then chair-elect of CCS, appointed me to the CC:DA. Nancy John, who had just been appointed CC:DA Chair, asked me to be secretary.

At that time, CC:DA was a very new committee that was working on controversial matters, such as how, when, and whether AACR2 would be implemented. The committee meetings and hearings were very heavily attended, as a result of which I became acquainted with and developed working relationships with a great many people, some of whom went on to become quite influential in cataloging circles.

From the time of that first appointment, I have never been without a committee appointment or office, and have often had to turn down appointments because they would have been over the ALA quota. In the mid-1980s, my interest in education and recruitment for cataloging led me to join the ALA Committee on Accreditation Site Visitor’s Pool, but it was not until 1987 that I was appointed to my first ALA-level committee. I applied the same kind of zeal and energy that I had learned on CC:DA to the *American Libraries* Editorial Advisory Committee—a level of activity that startled the editor and the rest of the committee, and after a while I was made committee chair.

In 1988, Nancy John nominated me to serve on the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (JSC), and at the same time I was asked to run for ALA Council. I also applied for a new

job, the one I hold today at Colorado. Because I could not be assured of getting any of these, I went forward with them all, and was successful at all three. Having cut my teeth on CC:DA, it did not occur to me to turn any of it down, and in fact, the work, although considerable, turned out not to be overwhelming.

When my first term on Council was up, I did not run again, mainly because I thought you were not supposed to, but I missed it terribly, so when my second term on the JSC was coming to a close, I got together a petition for Council, took it to a CC:DA meeting to gather signatures, turned in what was probably the only Council petition ALA has ever gotten that was signed entirely by catalogers, and ran for Council again. All told, I have been elected to Council for five terms. I was just re-elected to my fifth term.

Soon after my term on the JSC was over, I was asked to run for president of ALCTS. When I won, once again it never crossed my mind to resign from Council, but I have noticed that the only division presidents I can think of who have simultaneously served on Council have been from ALCTS—the other being Bob Holly.

During all this time, I was also writing, speaking, and publishing about things that I really cared about across a fairly wide range of topics. Additionally, I became an early and prolific contributor to electronic discussions. I did not do these things to gain name recognition, but I cannot deny that recognition was a byproduct. After all, people cannot recognize your name if you do not put it out in public.

In 1990, when I was on a panel at the Allerton Institute at the University of Illinois, I looked about me and saw people whom I had for some time regarded as leading lights in cataloging—people like Pauline Atherton Cochrane and Nancy Williamson—who were being introduced as “just retired” or “about to retire.” I realized that the generation of leaders that I had looked up to when my career was beginning was moving on, and the cadre of people that I had begun my career with was moving into the position of “leading lights.” Soon, that generation will be moving on, too.

You may have noticed that I have not mentioned mentors. I seem to be the sort of person who does not look for mentoring. But I certainly had help from many quarters, especially from people like Karen Horny, whose attitude toward service and toward publishing was extremely influential, and from Nancy John, who understood the importance of knowing how to navigate organizational waters.

Since serving as ALCTS president, I have mainly been involved with ALA at the Association level, but I still regard myself as a cataloger, and I regard my service on Council and to the broader association as service to ALCTS. There are very few technical services people who are active in the association at large—fewer than there need to be, in my opinion. I believe strongly that being able to bring a technical services

perspective to association work benefits the profession and the association, as well as benefiting ALCTS. When we concentrate our efforts exclusively (or nearly so) on specific and specialized facets of librarianship, it is easy to lose sight of what the profession at large is grappling with, and how our work relates to it. Further involvement beyond our own specializations enriches our understanding and contributes to the quality and relevance of our work. And at the very least, it does ALCTS good to have people outside the division being able to look at me and say, Hey look! She is a cataloger, and she is a genuine human being and a real librarian.

## Verbs and Proverbs

By Regina Romano Reynolds

I feel very honored to be on this panel today, especially given the confession I have to make. My library career got off to a very bad start—I tried to arrange the books in a small technical library by Library of Congress card number. In my defense, the numbers *were* printed in the books, and I was straight out of college with an English degree. Unfortunately, I thought the printed numbers were classification numbers. Of course, this was “BC”—before CIP (Cataloging in Publication)—back in the dark ages when we still produced hand-illuminated catalog cards. Then I went to library school at the University of Michigan and Judith Hopkins set me straight.

The title of my reflection is “Verbs and Proverbs.” When I was planning this talk, I realized that there were so many things I wanted to tell you in the short time allotted that I needed to give myself some structure in order to prevent rambling on about all of my interesting career experiences. I am going to start each segment of my talk with a proverb or quote, followed by a few reflections, and then a verb to sum things up. My first proverb was actually the anecdote about my initial library goof, a mistake that taught me a lot about the need to always test your assumptions.

I studied for my Masters of Library Science at the University of Michigan between 1975 and 1976. Judith Hopkins was one of my mentors. Independent study I did with Judith, entitled “Readings in Cataloging Theory and Practice,” was one of my most valuable library school classes. The readings opened my eyes to the enormous world of cataloging thought. Some great thinkers have provided—and continue to provide—a strong theoretical and practical foundation for our profession. And so, the first verb is *read*.

## Leadership

My second “proverb” is a quote about leadership from Adlai Stevenson: “It’s hard to lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse.” You may think you will

feel funny or frightened giving a presentation, volunteering for an ALCTS committee, or otherwise putting yourself out there. Everyone does the first time or the first couple of times. The first time I filled in for a veteran LC liaison to The Committee to Study Serials Cataloging (now The Continuing Resources Cataloging Committee), I took one look at the large crowd gathered to hear the latest news on LC efforts at cataloging simplification (a perennial topic) and ran to the ladies' room to calm down. I did not always feel comfortable in front of an audience and I certainly did not always feel comfortable speaking like an ISSN expert—or an expert of any kind, but first I played one and eventually I became one. It's been a very satisfying journey. The verbs are *volunteer*, *stretch*, *grow*.

### Vision

Next, I offer a fractured proverb: One picture is worth a thousand sound bytes. Libraries of the past dealt mainly with words—with text of various kinds. A quality that I share with the younger generation's fascination with YouTube and camera phones is that I am very visual; I often think in pictures. I encourage future cataloging leaders to remember that people learn differently. To reach the maximum number of people via our catalogs, we need to use more visuals and graphics. Catalogs with interfaces like Endeca and Aquabrowser use “word clouds,” color-coded displays, and other graphical devices to improve the user experience. Training manuals are more effective when they are enriched by screen shots, diagrams, and pictures of title pages and book covers. Videos can help with distance learning. Pictures of all kinds can provide another channel for our messages.

Even more important than literal pictures, we need to provide a vision for those we lead. Suzanne Striedieck, my mentor at Penn State where I first learned to catalog, presented me with a vision of the catalog as the heart or, maybe better, the brain of the library. That vision has served me well during my work in cataloging. I have learned that it is not the individual catalog record that counts nearly as much as the coherent, intelligent catalog that is created record by record, year by year. Even in a future where catalogs will take on very different shapes, interfaces, or contexts, I like to think that the catalog will continue to have relevance.

The future of bibliographic control is a topic of much speculation and activity right now—activity that I find fascinating and exciting, but I worry that we currently have no good vision of the future that we can hold up to entering or aspiring catalogers. I worry that we are tearing down the traditional past without having an inspiring vision that can lead us into a better future. I am following the progress of the Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control with great interest and with the hope that a vision will emerge from their work, a vision in which catalogers can

see a future for themselves that they can get excited about and work toward achieving. The verb is *visualize*, the result is *inspiration*.

### Public Service

The following quote from Albert Einstein resonates strongly with me: “Not everything that can be counted, counts; and not everything that counts can be counted.” Linda Bartley, head of the National Serials Data Program at LC when I was hired in 1976, was my LC mentor. Linda instilled in me the concept of libraries and ISSN work as a “public good.” Linda's concept has provided me with a strong service perspective. Even though cataloging is not considered public service, in the same way as reference work, all library work involves either direct or indirect service. Librarianship is a service profession and one that most people do not enter with the primary goal of acquiring wealth. I am encouraged to see cataloging returning to a focus on serving the library user. Although I agree that accountability is essential, especially in the current environment of shrinking budgets in public agencies, I believe libraries need to balance business values such as “the bottom line at all costs” with values based on providing a public good. If a young person were excited by the bottom line, that person would probably choose to get an MBA or an accounting degree rather than a degree in library science. To inspire energetic, creative, and committed librarians we need to remember Einstein's words: “Not everything that counts can be counted.” The verb is *serve*.

### A Career Working with Serials

My next proverb is another quote, from Ortega y Gasset:

Up to the present, the librarian has been principally concerned with the book as a thing, a material object. From now on, he must give his attention to the book as a living function. He must become a policeman, a master of the raging book.

When I found these words, I marveled that they were written in 1934, long before e-books, e-serials, and the entire raging Web menagerie. This was another quote that resonated strongly with me. “Mastering the raging serial,” is what I feel my career with the ISSN has been all about. My experience learning to catalog serials at Penn State set me up for an “ah-ha” moment when I first heard about the ISSN during a library school class at the University of Michigan. The year was 1976. The ISSN was only four years old. I was intrigued and little did I know that by the end of that year I would be busy assigning ISSN at the Library of Congress. Through all the ensuing years, ISSN work has never disappointed me. I have been privileged to interact with colleagues that form part of an “ISSN family” that now extends

to eighty-three ISSN national centers all over the world. I have been fortunate to be in a position that has given me the opportunity to grapple with serials as they evolved from primarily print publications to fledgling digital efforts emailed over BITNET or other early networks, to the full-fledged Web-based serials we see today. And I'm quite sure we have not yet seen the end point of serials evolution.

### Remember to Have Fun

Finally, I offer a quotation from that great philosopher and actor, Warren Beatty: "You've achieved success in your field when you don't know whether what you are doing is work or play." There are more ways to have fun today both on and off the job than I remember when I was growing up. Given this ever-stiffening competition, future cataloging leaders need to enjoy and share the fun in the work of organizing information, and it really can be fun! Having fun with our work can lead to creative solutions to problems and can result in valuable innovations. The environments at Google, Yahoo!, and other companies that attract younger workers encourage the kind of play that might result in new products. Staff at Google, for example, are allocated a percentage of time that they can devote to a project of their own devising.

In my first library job at Penn State, Suzanne Striedieck and I had great fun speculating about better ways to catalog, shortcuts in procedures, visioning improved rules, and just chatting. Staff in the National Serials Data Program (NSDP) have fun seeing the enormous variety of serials that arrive for ISSN assignments and watching the development of new forms of digital publications with wonder and amusement. ISSN requestors have many and varied motivations for wanting ISSN and they produce a much wider range of serials than those collected by any one library—even the Library of Congress. Recently, a would-be publishing mogul sent NSDP ISSN applications for thirty-one forthcoming magazines aimed at every imaginable category of aspiring model: teen models, hair models, catwalk models, supermodels—even body part models. The publishing world gets wilder and crazier every day and catalogers are in a unique position to document that world. The verb is *enjoy*. My good wishes are for long and fulfilling careers for all present and future catalogers and cataloging leaders.

### The Importance of Contributing to the Profession

By William A. Garrison

As I reflect on my own career, something that I do not do too frequently, I consider how extraordinarily fortunate I have been. When I first entered the profession (I want to stress the word profession), I was given a piece of advice. The

words went something like this: "You have chosen librarianship to be your career, and as such, you have a responsibility to give something back to the profession." I have always kept that advice in mind and have tried to give back to the profession in whatever ways I have been able. That has included teaching, serving on committees within the ALCTS CCS and the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, and currently serving as one of the ALA representatives to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Cataloguing Section.

During my career, I have worked at institutions that have valued professional contributions such as service on committees and other professional activities as well as publishing. As I have gained more experience and began to recruit, hire, and train catalogers, I have always encouraged these librarians to be active professionally. I have also continued to be active professionally, and I am fortunate that my activities have been recognized by my peers. Two other persons on this panel served as mentors to me during various stages of my career—Janet Swan Hill and Sheila Intner.

I have found my experiences and service within ALA (especially CCS) to be very rewarding. I have a long history within CCS, serving as the chair of the Catalog Management Discussion Group, as a member and chair of the Subject Analysis Committee, as Secretary of CCS, and as chair of CCS. In my current role as a member of the IFLA Cataloguing Section, I am serving as the editor of the section's newsletter, *SCATNews*, and am a member of the ISBD Review Group where I co-chair the Consolidated ISBD Examples Working Group. I am also a member of the CCS RDA Implementation Task Force. As a result of my long career working in Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member libraries, I was selected to be a fellow in the first ARL Research Libraries Leadership Fellows program.

When I (as someone who hires and trains other librarians) think about leadership in cataloging, I want to mention three components that I believe are crucial to leadership. One key component is mentoring. I am not thinking of mentoring in terms of a program but rather in terms of training, advising, coaching, and teaching. The second component is professional growth and continuing professional development both for myself as well as for those I have trained and supervised. The third component is taking the time to have discussions about the issues facing the profession in general and cataloging in particular.

In my role as the chair of CCS, I also had responsibility for appointing people to committees. I would encourage everyone to fill out a volunteer form and seek to be appointed to a committee. The section chairs within ALCTS are always looking for good people to appoint. Please do volunteer and get involved in ALCTS and CCS. It is very rewarding, and you get to work with many great colleagues.