BIBLIO-NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ACRL ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE DISCUSSION GROUP

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MIDWINTER MEETING INFORMATION SAN ANTONIO, 1992

The general meeting for the Discussion Group at the ALA Midwinter Meeting is Sunday, January 26, 9:30-12:30. The Chair does not anticipate that the meeting will actually run that long, unless we get a really good discussion going.

Membership Meeting and Discussions
Date and Time: Sunday, January 26, 1992
        9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Place: Menger Hotel, Ballroom C
Agenda:
1. New Officer Elections
2. Program 1992
3. Program 1993
4. Biblio-Notes Mailing List
5. Reports from other groups
6. Group discussion topic(s) and leader(s) for Annual
7. Other business
8. Group Discussion

1992 Program Planning Subcommittee
Date and Time: Saturday January 25 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Place: Marriott Riverwalk, Bowie Room

1993 Program Planning Subcommittee
Date and Time: Sunday, January 26, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Place: Hyatt San Antonio, Regency Ballroom E3
All interested parties are welcome.

MINUTES 1991 ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE ATLANTA

The ACRL English and American Literature Discussion Group met on 1 July 1991, following a panel discussion on Contemporary Poetry in American Libraries. The business meeting was chaired by Loss Glazier and was attended by approximately 27 people.

I. Announcements
Loss Glazier announced the results of the spring elections. They are as follows: William M. Gargan, Brooklyn College, Vice Chair/Chair Elect; Michaelyn Burnette, University of California, Berkeley, Secretary; William Baker, Northern Illinois University, Member-at-Large; Nancy Buchanan, Texas A&M University, Member-at-Large; Catherine Palmer, University of California, Irvine, Member-at-Large.

II. Reports on current Discussion Group Activities.
    A. Program proceedings.
    Loss Glazier reported on plans to publish

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

Average: 3.96

Comments: *Users not aware of the problems, easy to use for first time users, easier to use than print format, "new territory for humanities types," "they don't know what they're not getting"*

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

Average: 3.11

Comments: *Don't know how we did without it, easier to use than print format, "hate WILSEARCH"*

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

Average: 2.43

Comments: *"Truly awful," too many modes of searching and too little flexibility*

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

Average: 3.00

Comments: *"So far have turned up only one error," poor subject indexing, not user friendly, overly complex, need a printed thesaurus, more information about aspects of indexing (e.g. source vs. influence), inconsistent subject headings, lack of "see" references, level of indexing unclear, dissertations should be separate, no cross references to non-English titles*

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

Average: 2.07

Comments: *"We created our own instructions," not useful to users, not usable, we created our own, mistakes, lack of examples*

Specific Concerns

1. Concerns with Wilson's software as applied to MLA

"p" for print, searching a range of years, subject heading codes, author as author vs. author as subject not clear, 3-letter codes do not correspond to 2-letter codes, 3-letter codes call too much attention to themselves, lower search modes inflexible, too many modes, indexing not like other systems, WILSEARCH useless, help screens don't apply to MLA, confusion over field names and codes, "use of 'any' instead of 'or' is ludicrous."

2. Concerns with the MLA database

Lack of authority control, inconsistent application of index terms, analytic citations difficult for patrons to decipher, too much of database from sources not owned by library, searching titles by initial articles, thesaurus needed, cannot enter foreign titles in English, books on more than one author not indexed well, lack of cross references.

3. Downloading

Process is convoluted, erratic, "we ceased trying," "given up."

4. Other concerns

Build-up of files on hard disk, order of records (not alphabetical, not chronological).

5. Suggestions for improvement of the system.

Streamline downloading, search by range of years, limit to English, search codes, screen to highlight search term, provide better controlled vocabulary, provide onscreen instructions, better documentation, better customer support, index more monographs, retrospective conversion of earlier MLA, remove from Wilson, "MLA must take more responsibility for documentation."

Compiled by Loss Pequeno Glazier, State University of New York at Buffalo

POETRY COVERAGE IN ALTERNATIVE PRESS INDEX

The Editor received a message from Michael Montgomery, Princeton, asking that the following notice receive the attention of the Discussion Group:

From its first issue in 1969 through the end of 1988 the *Alternative Press Index* included the poetry published in the periodicals it covered, listing, for example, 1059 poems in 1986, 954 in 1987, and 739 in 1988. The front matter in the first number of 1989, however, announced that "As of Volume 21 (1989), we have stopped indexing poems;" although the editors continue to

index short stories, fiction, plays, and articles about poetry.

The Discussion Group's July panel on access to contemporary American poetry awakened me to the seriousness of *API*'s decision and inspired me to hope that the Group might take an interest in persuading the *API* editors to change their minds. I would welcome the inclusion of this matter on the Midwinter agenda and would encourage the group to sponsor a letter to the Alternative Press Center requesting that its staff resume poetry indexing. I will not be able to attend the meeting myself, but I trust that if my concern is shared it will be expressed by others and that some appropriate action can be agreed upon.

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.

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