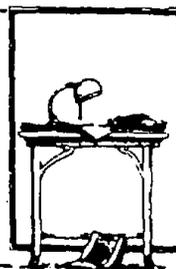

EDITOR'S NOTE



Times change, and so do I. Perhaps I should have seen this coming.

Some years ago, I served on a search committee for the director of libraries at my university. During the interview process, I posed the question, "What can you offer someone like me? Last week I went to the library to photocopy an article in an older journal. I found it to be stored on microfiche, and, not being familiar with the equipment used to make the copies, I did without."

The candidate's response was, "I'll pray for you."

A couple years later, I was on the search committee for the *next* director of libraries. (They don't seem to stay long.) I asked this candidate what has become a stock question with me, "What's the last book you read for pleasure?" She identified the book and then revealed that she had brought *half* of the book with her on the interview trip. It seems it was a paperback and too bulky for her luggage, so she tore off the unread portion and brought it with her. (I suspect she frequently does this with telephone directories.)

Another candidate in the same search expressed the opinion that "bookless" libraries were the wave of the future. They would conserve space, be more efficient, and be less costly. Well, probably so. They would also be boring, eliminate the ecstasy of browsing,

and generally perform the same function as book burning, which librarians are so fond of condemning. Before I forget to mention it, there are no such things as "books on tape," as Walden's would have you believe. There are stories on tape, poems on tape, and comments on tape, but books are *books*. They are beautiful, wonderful things. Who could love a cassette? But I digress.

It is clear that I may rail against the conversion of books and journals into electronic media as much as I wish, but to no avail. Indeed, it does not stop there. My recent sojourn to the library found me trying in vain to check out books. In the past, it was sufficient for me to simply call on one of the veterans of the library staff to identify me if I had forgotten my faculty I.D. card. And I *do* understand the need for identification even if one *has* been around for a quarter of a century. Now I find that my faculty I.D. card *with* picture is not enough. A *new* picture is required. Both pictures are shown here to illustrate to our readers that times change . . . and so do I (Figures 1 and 2).

Mickey Smith
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