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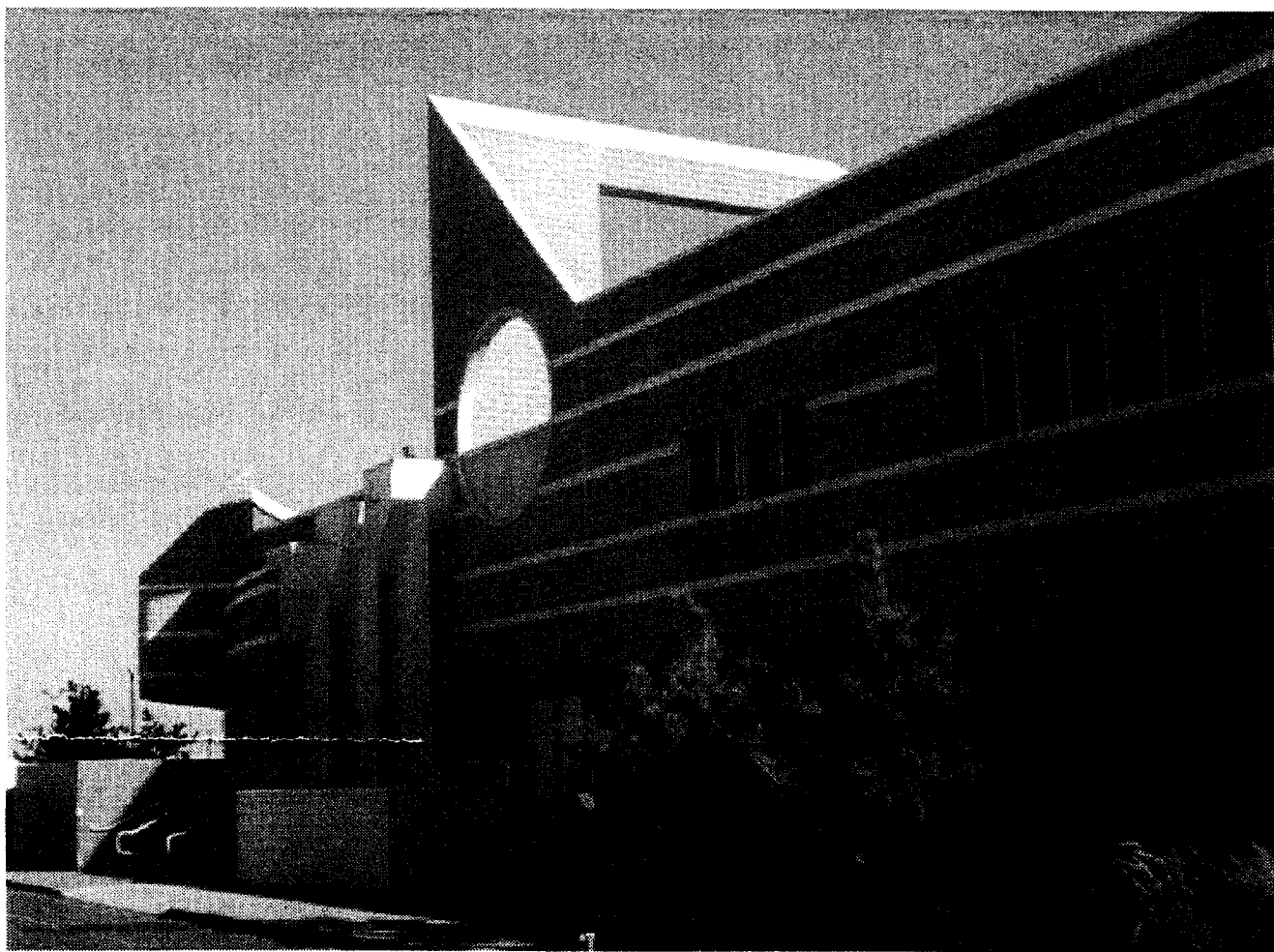
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Librarian

the "how I run my library good" letter sm



Ocean City (NJ) Public Library

Photo by Maurice J. Freedman, 11/2000

Institute's recent report, *Grading Grownups: American Adults Report on Their Real Relationships with Kids* (www.search-institute.org/norms/index.html), which can stimulate new ideas for asset building. You might also want to read and use Patrick Jones' marvelous handbook, *Connecting Young Adults and Libraries*, 2nd edition, Neal-Schuman, 1998.

Let us in libraries do our part in building strong, capable youth in our communities while giving our libraries a boost in future support!

Diane Tuccillo, Mesa Public Library, for *AzLA Newsletter*, p. 8, v. 24, no. 3, March 2001. Arizona Library Association, 14449 North 73rd Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85260-3133.

BERMAN'S BAG: UPDATES AND ADDITIONS

by Sanford Berman, U*L Contributing Editor

Here are two addenda to "The Top Censored Library Stories of 1998/2000" (U*L 118):

6. SELF-CENSORSHIP: LIBRARIANSHIP'S "DIRTY LITTLE SECRET"

Synopsis: The mainstream library press and Intellectual Freedom Establishment seldom acknowledge the rampant failure to select whole categories or genres of material, despite public interest and demand on the one hand or the mandate to reflect a broad spectrum of human belief and activity on the other. Instead, ALA officialdom proclaims an annual "Banned Books Week," largely based on individual "challenges" reported by mainly school and small-town libraries, that effectively masks the far more pervasive self-censorship practiced by librarians themselves. For example, most libraries don't collect comics or many graphic novels. Few get any zines whatever, even though that's arguably the hottest current publishing scene. Recent surveys—resolutely ignored by *American Libraries* and *Library Journal*—demonstrate that small press fiction and poetry, as well as numerous other well-reviewed freethought, labor, and alternative press titles, are woefully underrepresented in public and academic libraries

alike. And then there's sex, particularly if it's in the form of photos or film or deals with beyond-the-pale topics like anal intercourse or S&M. Such books and videos—like the excellent products from Down There Press (San Francisco) and Factor Press (Mobile, Alabama)—top most lists of virtually banned material. By contrast, the ongoing trend, particularly in public libraries, is to buy large quantities of circulation-boosting "popular" materials, especially conglomerate-produced, heavily-hyped "blockbusters" that typically end up being sold for 25¢ a piece within 6 to 8 months.

Sources: Rory Litwin, "Issues of Inside Censorship and the ALA," *Counterpoise*, January 1998, p. 11-13, reprinted in *Alternative Literature, 1998/1999* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000), p. 78-80; Charles Willett, "The Almost Banned Book Awards," *Counterpoise*, January 1999, p. 20, reprinted in *ALL, 1998/1999*, p. 111; Earl Lee, "Really Banned Books," *Counterpoise*, April 1998, p. 7-10, reprinted in *ALL, 1998/1999*, p. 112-115; "Almost Banned Book Awards of 1998," *Counterpoise*, January 1999, p. 21, reprinted in *ALL, 1998/1999*, p. 116; Scott Walter, "RLIN Holdings of Books Reviewed in *Counterpoise*, Volume 2 (1998)," *Counterpoise*, April 1999" p. 15-19, reprinted in *ALL, 1998/1999*, p. 117-123; Rita A. Marinko/Kristin H. Gerhard, "Representations of the Alternative Press in Academic Library Collections," *College & Research Libraries*, July 1998, p. 363-376, reprinted in *ALL, 1998/1999*, p. 219-229; Sanford Berman, "Foreword," in Toni Samek, *Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in American Librarianship, 1967-1974* (McFarland, 2000), p. xi-xviii; Charles Willett, "Alternative Libraries and Infoshops: the Struggle Against Corporate and Government Indoctrination in American Schools and Universities....," *Librarians at Liberty*, December 2000, p. 11-25; Earl Lee, "Almost Banned Books, 1998 and 1999," *Counterpoise*, January/April 2000, p. 32-37; Daniel C. Tsang, "The Alternative Media: Open Sources On What's Real," *International Journal on Grey Literature*, v. 1, no.2 (2000), p. 61-63; Stephen Harris, "Discourse and Censorship: Librarians and the Ideology of Freedom," *Counterpoise*, July/October 1999, p. 14-18; Nancy Kranich, "A Question of Balance: the Role of Libraries in Providing Alternatives to the Mainstream Media," *Counterpoise*, July/October 1999, p. 7-10; Jason

Kucsma, "Preserving Zines in the Library: Countering Marginalization & Extinction," *Zine Guide*, no.3, p. 11-19.

7. BIBLIO-STALINISM AT HENNEPIN COUNTY LIBRARY

Synopsis: In a scenario uncannily reminiscent of the kind of Soviet (and other totalitarian) excess that George Orwell fictionalized as the "memory hole"—that is, removing inconvenient or undesirable people, events, and ideas from public awareness or consciousness by destroying all references to them and, in the case of persons and groups, also wholly erasing their words and images—all five works in the Hennepin County Library collection by me, together with another about me, in late January 2000 no longer appeared in the HCL online catalog and likewise seemed to have vanished from the shelves. A December 6, 1999 *Library Journal Digital* article ("Hennepin County Drops Cataloging Bulletin") speculated that the late-1999 termination of the 26-year-old, award-winning *HCL Cataloging Bulletin* "may be an attempt by HCL to purge itself completely of former Head Cataloger Sandy Berman, founder of the *Bulletin*, who resigned earlier this year after a clash with the library's director." In a February 1, 2000 press release, I wondered aloud:

Is that also why the books have disappeared? Am I being morphed into a non-person, flushed down an Orwellian "memory hole"?

Library Journal Digital (2-21-00), *American Libraries* (April 2000), *Library Hotline* (2-21-00), and *American Libraries Online* (2-14-00) reported the initial discovery, most noting my charge of "bibliocide" and quoting HCL's Spinmeisterin, who declared that no formal recall had been issued, that a few physical volumes had since been found, and that the wipeout may have been "inadvertent." That concluded coverage of this genuinely unique and extraordinary episode by the orthodox library press. Except that the "episode" was far from over. Developments during the next 8 months included brazen stonewalling by HCL management and the Library Board, failure to notify law enforcement agencies about the indisputable database-tampering and book thefts, rigid denial that any "censorship" had taken place, refusal to share essential details of the event with system staff, no indication of what (if any)

measures had been instituted to prevent recurrence of such an intellectual freedom travesty, and—finally—engagement of an outside investigator, who in October produced a lengthy study confirming "that it is unlikely that the deletions...were anything other than deliberate," but that no "smoking gun" could be identified. No *American Libraries* or *Library Journal* readers knew anything about the post-February saga, even though both publications had been fully informed through press releases, clippings, and documents, among them the 27-page "redacted" investigative report.

Sources: "Books by Sanford Berman Removed From Hennepin County Library Catalog," *LG Communicator* (LAPL Librarians' Guild), January/April 2000, p. 20-21; Robert Franklin, "Publisher's Comments," *Journal of Information Ethics*, Spring 2000; Robert Halfhill, "Forced Resignation Sparks Protest" (letter), *Lavender: Biweekly Magazine for the Midwest Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender Community*, June 2, 2000; R. Halfhill, "Shelving Sandy Berman" (letter), *Siren*, June 1, 2000, p. 3; S. Berman, "Where Have All the 'Berman Books' Gone? A Series of Memoranda and Letters," *Librarians at Liberty*, December 2000, p. 29-32; "Biblio-Stalinism," *City Pages*, January 24, 2001, p. 6; "Sanford Berman Censorship/Intellectual Freedom Issue," *LG Communicator*, November/December 2000, p. 7; "Where Have All the 'Berman Books' Gone?" (press releases): 2-1-00, 2-23-00 (reprinted in *Library Juice*, March 8, 2000, p. 3-4); 4-27-00, 5-23-00; 6 "Request for reconsideration of materials" forms, submitted 2-8-00 by S. Berman; Charles Brown letter (in response to reconsideration requests), 3-2-00; S. Berman letter to Charles Brown, 3-4-00; Thomas O'Neill (HCL Sr. Human Resources Representative) letters to S. Berman: 7-28-00, 10-13-00, 11-9-00 (with "redacted" report), 12-12-00; S. Berman letters to T. O'Neill: 8-1-00, 10-2-00, 10-25-00, 11-23-00, 11-30-00, 1-16-01.

The Mokhiber/Weissman expose of LC's abject pandering to Coca-Cola, cited as an online document in U*L 118, has since appeared at least twice in hardcopy: "The Real Thing: Democracy as a Contact Sport," *Kids Can Make a Difference Newsletter*, v. 6, no. 1 (Winter 2001), p. 8-9; "Democracy As Contact Sport," *Adbusters*, no. 34 (March/April 2001), p. 37.

This is a worthy addition to the roster of anti-poverty and related periodicals appearing in "Must 'The Poor' Always Be Among Us?" (U*L 117, p. 7-9):

Too Much: a Quarterly Commentary on Capping Excessive Income and Wealth. United For A Fair Economy, 37 Temple Place, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02111. \$15/Year. (America's only newsletter dedicated to the proposition that the United States would be a considerably more democratic, prosperous, and caring nation if we narrowed the vast gap between the very wealthy and everybody else." Also available from UFE: Chuck Collins and Felice Yeskel's "action-oriented, movement building guide," *Economic Apartheid in America*, priced at \$16.95; Tamara Sober Giecek's \$15 *Teaching Economics As If People Mattered*, "21 lesson plans designed to stimulate active student participation"; and Responsible Wealth's pro-living wage report, *Choosing the High Road*, @ \$6.50. Telephone orders: 1-877-564-6833.)

"Why Catalog? (U*L 116, p. 11-12), advocated in-house, local cataloging as a bulwark against the often error-laden, access-limiting, and alienating records produced by "giant, distant, and essentially unaccountable networks and vendors." In "Library of Congress Service Erosion," Maureen Moore details the precipitously declining quality and worth of LC cataloging during the Billington years," exemplified, for instance, by the introduction of next-to-useless "core level cataloging" and the devolution of "copy cataloging" review from professionals to technicians. (See *LG Communicator*, September/October 2000, p. 16-18. Moore's original, more extensive remarks appeared in the Library of Congress Professional Guild's 7-24-00 *Bulletin Board*.) The direct connection between outsourcing, catalog department downsizing, and dramatically reduced access to library resources is manifest in this paragraph from the minutes of the Librarians' Guild Professional Concerns Committee meeting held October 1, 2000 at the IAPL union's office:

At Central Library, Catalog Department has notified the Subject Departments that music CDs will no longer be cataloged because that task was contracted out and it was determined that the cost per unit is too high. Also draft environmental

impact reports and rare books will no longer be cataloged because of a lack of catalogers. Two catalog positions have been cut in the 2000-2001 budget... The cataloging of the new collection for the rebuilt Studio City branch is being contracted out... There also seems to be a trend to reduce the LAPL collection of government documents because of their need to be specially cataloged.

(Source: *LG Communicator*, v. 34, no. 6 [November/December 2002], p. 38.)

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Persistence Of Vision – Forgotten But Worthwhile Films from the 1970's

Each Persistence of Vision column offers an annotated list of video titles that no library collection should be without. Available formats, i.e. VHS and DVD, are given as of the date the column was written.

Instead of examining a genre this time, we'll take a look at some forgotten films from an often-maligned (not without good reason, of course) decade: The 1970's. Most of this issue's films were critical darlings that never found an audience. Through the magic of video, of course, your library can help spread the word about ten of these forgotten but worthwhile films, which are listed in chronological order.

O Lucky Man! (1973) VHS. The leader of the student rebellion in director Lindsay Anderson's *If...*, Mick Travis (Malcolm McDowell), returns here as a naive coffee salesman determined to push his way to the top in a satirically absurd modern world. This epic (178 minutes) and mammoth allegory is filled with brilliant performances (several actors, notably Sir Ralph Richardson and Rachel Roberts, appear in multiple roles) and a wonderful