

Against the Grain

Volume 24 | Issue 2

Article 5

April 2012

The Grass Really Is Sometimes Greener

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Recommended Citation

Link, Forrest E. (2012) "The Grass Really Is Sometimes Greener," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 24: Iss. 2, Article 5.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6124>

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Against the Grain

“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

ISSN: 1043-2094

The Grass Really Is Sometimes Greener

by **Forrest E. Link** (Acquisitions Librarian, The College of New Jersey; Phone: 609-771-2412; Fax: 609-637-5158) <linkf@tcnj.edu>

Some thirty years ago, when **Katina Strauch** convened the first **Charleston Conference**, an idea came of age. This idea was that publishers, vendors, and librarians have much in common and should interact more deeply. As this notion took hold, and as the conversations fostered by the **Conference** and, later by its offshoot, *Against the Grain*, continued, it became a commonplace that they share not just the usual lofty goals, but also overlapping skill sets. That is, the experiences gained by working in publishing or librarianship are of value to — and transferable to — the vendor community. Likewise, experience in librarianship or the vendor community can be valuable to publishers. Vendors and publishers began to recruit and hire librarians. The boundaries between these communities became more fluid.

But despite the common set of skills and values found at publishers, vendors, and librar-

ies, workplace cultures can differ dramatically. Eighteen months ago (has it really been that long?), when I joined the ranks of academic librarians after a long career in book-vending, I understood some aspects of my work life would be different — going to the same office every day, buying stuff instead of selling stuff, having colleagues physically on-hand, and, most significantly, having supervisory responsibility for a workgroup instead of working independently — but I didn’t appreciate *how* different. Having spent over 25 years visiting libraries and working with librarians everyday, I thought I knew libraries. I was wrong. What I knew was library acquisitions and collection development. I had the skills, but I needed to learn the culture. It was this realization that different sorts of librarians inhabit truly different worlds that led me to suggest to **Katina** that some of my observations might be of interest to other librarians curious about changing fields within the profession.

This resulted in an occasional column in *Against the Grain*. Subsequently, we thought it might be interesting to hear other voices.

In this collection of articles, six librarians who have crossed the vendor/publisher/librarian boundary give us their perspectives on the differences in workplace culture and lessons they learned along the way.

In “Changing Glasses: Does Our World Look Different as a Vendor or a Librarian,” **Corey Seeman**, the Director of the Kresge Business Administration Library, Ross School of Business at the **University of Michigan** (Ann Arbor), reflects on his career path which took him from a small, special library to the world of an ILS vendor and then the academic library administration. He proffers his belief that the commercial side of librarianship is not so dif-



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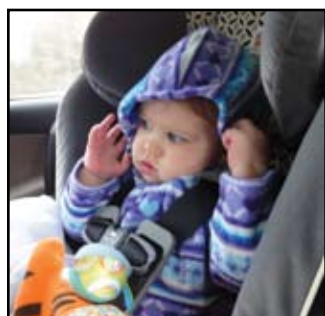
If Rumors Were Horses

The gorgeous **Xan Arch** wrote me the other day to say that she would like to have a hiatus from her column for the next few issues of *ATG*! Why? Because she and her husband are expecting their first baby this June (yay!) and things are getting pretty crazy preparing for leave from work and the new baby. **Xan** says she doesn’t know how much time she will have to

write and maybe baby naptime will be good column-writing time! Either way, **Xan** promises that she will be back at work by October and should be ready to resume normal writing. And hopefully come to **Charleston**! Golly gee whiz!

So sad. **Deb Vaughn’s** mother, **Helen “Sue” Vaughn**, of Clemson, SC., passed away several days ago. I remember meeting **Sue** at **Deb’s** engagement party and she was a kind and caring woman just like her daughter. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and **Bo** and the family, **Deb**.

Speaking of **Deb**, the review of **Michael Gorman’s** book *Broken Pieces* in **Deb’s** column in the Feb issue of *ATG*, caused a great sensation. Did you see it in the last issue (v.24#1, p.40-41). The **Charleston Conference** working group had been talking about **Michael** and how



Pictured above is **Heather Miller’s** granddaughter, **Natalie**. **Heather** says she is a very happy, agreeable baby, now about 9 months old.

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The Grass Really Is Sometimes ...
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ferent and that all librarianship is centered on human interactions.

Valerie Tucci, the Physical Sciences/Engineering Librarian at **The College of New Jersey**, comes from years of management at a small, very hierarchical corporate library. In her article, "Crossing the Bridge Connecting the Corporate and Academic Library Worlds," she outlines the cultural and organizational differences between academic and special librarianship and describes her adjustment to academic life.

In "The Refugee Returns Home: An MLS in Corporate America," **Kate Kosturski**, Instructional Services Coordinator for Europe at **JSTOR**, writes of her personal journey to librarianship, painting herself as one of the "refugees" from other fields.

Laura Harris, a Web trainer at **Springshare**, writes of her move from a large academic library to a small software company in "Joining the Dark Side." In her article, she comments on the joys of working from a home office and the advantages of smaller organizations.

In "Lessons Learned," **Amira Aaron**, Associate Dean, Scholarly Resources at **North-eastern University Libraries**, writes of a long career that has moved from academic libraries to the vendor world and back. She offers her prescription for insuring success in either camp and discusses the challenges ahead.

Finally, in "The Value of Experience," **Scott Smith** reflects on a long career in book-vending and writes of his decision to return to the library world he so clearly loves. Along the way, he challenges the occasionally limited vision of library hiring committees who discount non-traditional experience. 🌱

against the grain
people profile

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Forrest Link

BORN & LIVED: Except for one wayward year, I've lived my entire life in New Jersey.

EARLY LIFE: Pathologically happy.

FAMILY: Wife, **Margaret**; Two daughters, **Adrianna** (grad student at **Johns Hopkins**) and **Alicia** (soon-to-be-minted BFA from **BU**); Son, **Jeremy** (soon-to-be-unemployed philosopher with BA from **Rowan**).

EDUCATION: BA, Classics, **Rutgers College**; MA, Classics, **Rutgers**; MLS, **Rutgers**.

FIRST JOB: Movie theater usher (remember those?).

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: After getting my MLS, I was a cataloger for **B&T** before being detoured for nearly 30 years in vendorland as a rep for **Midwest Library Service** and **Blackwell** (remember them?).

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Sing with a local choir, read voraciously but not critically.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Wind, Sand, & Stars*, **Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**. *The Supper of the Lamb*, **Robert Farrar Capon**. *Mating*, **Norman Rush**.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: The smug and self-important.

PHILOSOPHY: Work hard, treat others decently, be grateful.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: When **Lyman Newlin** remembered my name.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Achieve tenure at **TCNJ**, understand **Microsoft Access**.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: More heavily dependent on electronics with ongoing struggles to fund them. Lots more tablet readers (in both senses of the word). 🌱



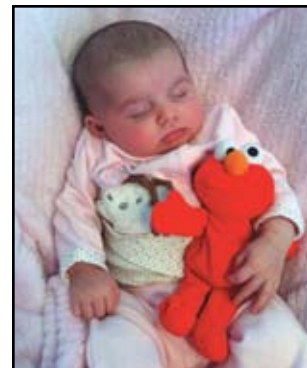
Rumors
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John visited **Charleston** recently with the delightful **Kim Robinson** (Regional Director of Sales for the Southeast and MidAtlantic, **ProQuest**) and we had a grand old time talking about business, silent movies, and video games.

More from this side of the pond, following its acquisition by **ALA publishing**, **Neal-Schuman** shut down its New York City operations on March 22. Here are email addresses for key people at **ALA** who will be handling the **Neal-Schuman** imprint. **Michael Jeffers**, publisher <jjef-fers@ala.org> and **Jill Davis**, marketing manager <davis@ala.org>.

And heard from the lovely **Kathryn Suarez** who will be moving to **ABC-Clio** after five years with **Neal-Schuman**.

The wonderful **Mike Sweet** caught me up on the status of the scholarly **John Dove** whose mother was a librarian, **John** was on his way to the **London Book Fair**. **John** is out of the hospital and bicycling away still after surgery on his hematoma from his bike accident and surgery to remove a small growth on his kidney. But you can't keep a good **Credo** man down!



Pictured above is **Lainie Brown's** first granddaughter, **Madison Olivia Brown**, 7 weeks old. Congratulations **Lainie!**

Was talking to the focused **Audrey Powers** the other day about a potential preconference before the **32nd Charleston Conference**, and she told me that her son, **Austin** (remember him?) is curator of an art gallery in China. When he was a boy he fell in love with China and is now doing what he always wanted to do. Anyway, **Austin** was coming to Florida for a brief visit. BTW,

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Future Dates for Charleston Conferences

Preconferences and Vendor Showcase Main Conference

	Preconferences and Vendor Showcase	Main Conference
2012 Conference	7 November	8-10 November
2013 Conference	6 November	7-9 November
2014 Conference	5 November	6-8 November
2015 Conference	4 November	5-7 November