



Newsletter of

The Association of Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences

Volume IV, Number 2

October, 1980

## Marketing, Media and Making Money:

or, Why not "Sell" your Historical Collection....

by Charles A. Isetts

Copyright by the Association

In this period of high inflation and shrinking library budgets, fund-raising is a necessity for the history of health sciences librarian. The history librarian, a term I will use to avoid semantic confusion, can no longer afford to accept his or her budget as given. The sky-rocketing prices of rare medical books and the spiraling costs of conservation and restoration, among other items, have strained the budgets of all but the most wealthy libraries, forcing the history librarian to seek outside sources of funding.<sup>1</sup>

Adding to the financial woes of the history librarian is the low priority given to historical collections at budget time. The history of medicine as a subject area has declined in medical schools for years, and in many schools no longer even appears in the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> This makes it very difficult for the director of a health sciences library to assign a high priority to the historical collection when there is little enough money to adequately support those disciplines represented in the medical school curriculum.

However, history librarians should not use the excuse of shrinking budgets and low priorities to stand idly by while their collections disintegrate. The history of medicine is still a vital part of medical education and will continue to be an integral part of the total medical experience.<sup>3</sup> Librarians whose responsibility is the care of historical collections have a duty to see that their collections are adequately supported, and since it is clear that full financial support is unlikely to come from within their organizations, support has to be sought from outside sources. It may be upsetting to some, but a crucial part of the history librarian's job is fund-raising, and it will, in all probability, become even more important in the future.

Given the importance of outside funding to the development of an historical collection, the history librarian must give a high priority to conceptualizing a fund-raising strategy. In developing this strategy, the librarian can learn much from the business world. By using

business concepts to solve library problems, librarians gain access to a wide body of scholarly literature, too often overlooked. Time is too limited to discuss the full range of business concepts that are applicable to the library world, thus I will concentrate on one idea which is central to fund-raising, the concept of marketing strategy.

Peter Drucker defines the purpose of a business as the creation of customers.<sup>4</sup> He specifically emphasized that it is businessmen themselves who create markets and not abstract forces such as the economy, God, or nature. A customer may feel a need for a good or a service, but such needs are only potentials until a businessman converts those needs into specific demands for specific goods or services. For example, no one demanded xerox machines until someone marketed them. The point Drucker makes, is that the purpose of a business is always defined by people outside of that business. It is this lesson that history librarians, if not all librarians, should take to heart.

To be successful a business, or a library, has to define its goals as the satisfaction of the wants and needs of its customers; the businessman does not ask "what do we want to sell," but "what does the customer want to buy." The aim of a marketing strategy is to know the customers' wants so well that the goods and services offered by the business will sell themselves. The point I wish to emphasize is that the above is as true for libraries as for business. It may be revolutionary, but the basic purpose of a library, like a business, is the creation of customers for its services. Simply putting books on shelves and waiting for patrons to arrive does not create a successful library, at best it only creates a warehouse for books. The function of a librarian, in this context, is to convert the felt or un-felt wants and needs of potential library customers into a demand for library services. To insure that our historical collections are fully utilized, history librarians have to ask "what do our customers want?"

In this context, fund-raising becomes one part of a librarian's overall marketing strategy. Before we can ask people for money, we have to clearly understand what those people want from us. Anyone who gives money to a library, including private donors, the federal government, or foundations, has in effect become a customer of that library. The donor, for whatever reason, has seen a need for the library's services and is willing to pay for those services. Thus the first step in fund-raising for a library becomes knowing your customers.

Some customers of a history of medicine library are relatively easy to know, such as doctoral students in the history of medicine. However, it is probably a truism to state that those who might give money to a library are also the most difficult customers to understand because they themselves do not directly use the library services. An elderly millionaire or a grant officer might never physically use the resources of an historical collection, but even more than the doctoral student, may be that collection's most important customer. Fortunately, learning the wants of government agencies and foundations has given rise to a bountiful literature, and after study the librarian may simply define the library's services to meet their needs. But note that it is not the other way around; the secret to grantmanship is not what the library needs, but what the granting agency wants to support. Outside needs must always come first.

Since there is such a large body of literature on grantmanship, I will concentrate primarily on private donors. There is no simple way to identify all the people who might potentially support an historical collection. The best and perhaps the only way for the history librarian to learn the wants of his or her customers is to meet, as far as possible, everyone in the community who might have an interest in the history of medicine. Simply put, the history librarian needs to go outside the library to meet the customers; he or she cannot afford to wait at the reference desk until the customers arrive.

Once the history librarian has met a number of potential supporters, he or she can begin to formulate opinions on the felt and unmet needs of these people. There is no formula for getting this information and above all there is no quantitative measure of what such needs would be. Through empathy with potential supporters, the history librarian will have to judge what the needs are and then develop a marketing strategy to meet those needs.

At this point, I think it would be helpful to give some concrete illustrations of what I'm trying to say. The library which I head is the History of Health Sciences Library and Museum of the University of Cincinnati Medical Center Libraries. It was created in 1977 to house a collection of over 50,000 items related to the history of medicine. Since the library was new,

there was an immediate need to create supporters, i.e., customers. The Library has adequate space, but there is no humidity control, no fire protection, and water pipes run directly across the book stacks. There was thus an immediate need for substantial sums of money, but money could not be raised until people knew of and supported the new library. Thus the first steps in creating the library, past putting the books on the shelves, painting the sign on the door, and sweeping the floor, was to create a demand for the library's services. As said above, to create this demand the needs of potential supporters have to be identified. Thus most of our resources — i.e., my time — has been used for meeting people rather than for dealing with traditional library tasks. This is not to say that the traditional library tasks did not need to be done, but resources are scarce and must be directed toward the highest priorities of the Library. It became clear quite soon that one general need of potential donors was for people to remember their personal contributions to medicine. Donors felt a need for someone to preserve the memory of their accomplishments.

It was upon this need that we based one facet of our marketing strategy. To meet this need, we publicized that one of the basic purposes of the library was the preservation of the present as well as the past. We would of course preserve and make available the old and rare volumes in our collection, but a main focus of our efforts would be to insure that the historically important items of the present would be collected: particularly those items relating to prominent individuals in the Cincinnati medical community. Our stated goal was to preserve the present for the future. As a means of advertising this goal we produced a seven-minute documentary film on the library. The library controlled the content of the film and hired a professional director as a consultant to actually do the filming. From its conception, the film was aimed toward those people who would potentially support and/or give money to the library. Most of these people would be mid- or late-career physicians. Thus it was kept brief so that it could fit into busy personal schedules and so it could be shown at a wide variety of functions. The content of the film emphasized the history of Cincinnati medicine and the contributions made by past physicians, in short, nostalgia. We also clearly emphasized that one of the basic purposes of the library was to keep alive the memory of the accomplishments of current physicians. Only as a sub-theme did we describe the library itself and what we needed, and this was done only to show how we could be of service. In effect, the film became the advertising device of the library, used to get its message to potential supporters. It was not meant to be a direct fund-raising device: it solicited support rather than money; for without support, fund-raising would be impossible.

The example I have given is only one part of the overall strategy used to gain support for the History

of Health Sciences Library and Museum. The key is not in specific activities, such as the film, but in the general concepts which led to the production of the film. For a library to successfully serve its public or to successfully raise money, it has to act in a businesslike manner. It is the public and not the librarian who determines what services are wanted. If the history librarian can successfully identify the wants and needs of its public, support will be gained for the historical collection. Then, with a strong level of support, fund-raising become easy, for fund-raising is after all nothing more than getting people to spend money on something they want. The hard part is identifying the want not getting the people to spend the money. Referring to my title, we shouldn't really have to sell the library; if we have done our homework and have identified the wants of our customers and have created a means of satisfying those wants, the library will sell itself.

References:

1. Lee Ash, "The Market for Medical Books," AB Bookman's Weekly, 63 (February 26, 1979), p.1528.
2. Edmund D. Pellegrino, "Medical History and Medical Education: Points of Engagement," Clio Medica, 10 (1975), p.295.
3. Ibid; see also, George E. Gifford, Jr., "Medical History: Crisis or Cure?" Clio Medica, 10 (1975), p.304-308.
4. Peter F. Drucker, Management, New York: Harper & Row, 1974, p. 61. For a full discussion of Drucker's ideas see specifically chapter 6, "What is a business?" pp. 58-73; and Peter F. Drucker, Managing for Results, New York: Harper & Row, 1964, p.91-110.

Editorial note: Charles Isetts' library at the University of Cincinnati was described in this newsletter, Volume III, Number 4, April, 1980, page six.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Watermark is issued quarterly to members of the Association and subscribers. President, ALHHS, Janet Kubinec, Curator, Historical Collection, Falk Library of the Health Professions, Scaife Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa 15261. Secretary-Treasurer, Jonathon Erlen, 14247 Shoredale Lane, Farmers Branch, Texas 75234. Editor: Lisabeth M. Holloway, 58 W. Tulpehocken Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 19144.

The purpose of this Association shall be to serve the professional interests of librarians, archivists and other specialists actively engaged in the librarianship of the history of the health sciences by promoting an exchange of information and by improving standards of service.

Dues: \$10 per year to persons actively involved in librarianship of the history of the health sciences.

### Books & articles of note...

GUNNER, JEAN. Simple Repair and Preservation Techniques for Collection Curators, Librarians and Archivists. Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. 12 p. \$ 2.00.

Ms. Gunner is bookbinder, artist, conservator and teacher at the Hunt Botanical Library. Ms. Gunner cautions in her book that "It is always better to do nothing than to attempt a repair that you are not really sure about." Her pamphlet tells you what to do and how and when to do it.

In her book she lists and illustrates twelve tools which are utilized in paper repairs, sewing single and multi-signature books, constructing hollow tubes for spine repair, making a protective "simple plase box", encapsulating leaves in polyester films, and hinging items to be matted.

Ms. Gunner's students including myself have successfully practiced her methods. All directions are specific and presented step-by-step. The illustrations are both detailed and easy to follow. Her techniques should be used not only by curators, librarians and archivists but also by library staff involved in book processing and mending. Although some of the procedures may be used for rare books, all of them may be used in everyday repair and preservation of ordinary library books.

Recommended for all libraries. Available from Hunt Institute at the above address.

-- Janet Kubinec

\*\*\*\*\*

### ALHHS doings...

This year we elect two steering committee members to serve two-year terms. The slate of nominees follows:

- Lucretia McClure
- Charles A. Isetts
- Glen Jenkins
- Dorothy Whitcomb

Our present Secretary-Treasurer, Jon Erlen, has kindly agreed to serve another term. No other nominations for this post have been received. Section III A of our by-laws state: "The Steering Committee" . . . shall submit nominations to the voting membership with a call for additional nominations."

Please send additional nominations to me (at the address given in the left-hand column of this page) before November 25, 1980. Ballots will then be mailed to all voting members. - Janet Kubinec, President

## Directory of libraries in the history of the health sciences...

### Selected entries

**HAHNEMANN MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA. ARCHIVES AND HISTORY OF MEDICINE COLLECTIONS.**

Founded 1848; Archives established 1978

Lucy F. Cooke Room, New College Building, 245 North 15th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. 215-448-7811

Hours: 9-5, Mon. - Fri., preferably by appointment.

Archivist/History of Medicine Librarian: Barbara Williams.

Services to the general public: Reference, photocopy; no borrowing, no microfilming; interlibrary loan available on restricted basis.

Materials in the history of the health sciences: Paracelsus collection of Constantine Hering (189 vols). Homeopathy and history of Hahnemann College: 200 vols, incl. homeopathic pamphlets and ephemera. Non-homeopathic textbooks and monographs 1750-1920: ca. 650. Histories, bibliographies, etc.: ca 400 vols. George L. Becker Collection in History of Neuroscience.

Archives and manuscripts: Thomas L. Bradford scrapbooks on homeopaths in America, 1916: 35 vols. North American Academy of Homeopathia, Allentown, Pa, archival material and memorabilia, 1 cu.ft. Constantine Hering, 1800-1880, papers and memorabilia, ca.5 lin.ft. College archives, incl. early ms MD theses (93 vols), photographs, other homeopathic society archives. Recent archival material actively collected.

Museum materials: Instruments, homeopathic medicine cases, etc.

Catalogues, etc.: Guide to Paracelsus Collection, W.B. McDaniel, 2d, in College of Physicians of Philadelphia, Fugitive leaves (out of print). Collection reported in part to ULC.

**KANSAS. UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES. SPENCER RESEARCH LIBRARY. KANSAS COLLECTION.**

Founded 1892

Lawrence, Kansas, 66044  
913-864-4274

Hours: 8-5 Mon.-Fri., 9-1 Sat. during Fall and Spring semesters.

Curator: Sheryl K. Williams. Assistant Curator: Elizabeth Stewart.

Services to the general public: Reference; photocopying (under copyright restrictions; 10¢ page); microfilming; interlibrary loan only by photocopy; tours; exhibits.

General collection: Manuscripts, maps, photographs, architectural drawings, cartoons, serials and monographs treating Kansas and Kansas region, state documents, municipal publications. Politics, social movements, business records, the arts, military affairs, etc.

Materials in the history of the health sciences: Directories of Kansas physicians, and scattered holdings in above categories.

Manuscripts, archives, etc.: Organizations, etc.: Elk County (Kansas) Medical Society, ledger, 1901-1948. Pratt County (Kansas) Medical Society, miscellaneous papers, 1887-1954. Kansas Society of Radiological Technicians, papers. Physicians: Samuel Brooks Anderson, 1825-1907; accounts, ledgers, notebooks. Hiram Clark, d. 1855, day book, 1854-1855, letters. Havilah E. Hastings, d. 1908, account books, miscellaneous papers, 1881-1907. Woodson D. Hoover, records, 1870-1871. W. F. Osborne, accounts, 1893-1897.

Photographs: General collection includes some medical portraits, pictures of medical artifacts, pharmacies, etc., and military medical subjects from Fort Riley, Kansas.

Catalogues, etc.: Serials, monographs, and state documents reported to the National Union Catalogue; manuscripts reported to NUCMC.



Medicine  
Science  
Technology

Rare Books,  
Manuscripts,  
& Prints

Catalogues Issued  
Libraries or important single volumes purchased

**Jeremy Norman & Co., Inc.**

442 Post Street  
San Francisco, Calif. 94102  
[415] 781-6402 · Cable: LOGOS

