

# The Academy Perspective

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Vada Lee Barkley, Editor

## MY CHRISTMAS WRAP-UP

by Vada Lee Barkley

What a great year this has been for the Academy! Our membership has reached more than 130. Most of them. Lloyd tells me, have paid their dues. Our attendance is increasing. Our programs are attractive and our fellowship and food are delightful. Our members are active in all three areas of Academy interests.

The Perspective now includes articles from a variety of Academy writers. From the vast store of talent and experience among us, I am beginning to assemble material for future issues. I need all kinds of items, no longer than 200 words; typed, if possible.

Suggestions: humor, family, seasonal, research, book reviews, health-emotional, physical, spiritual-travel, nostalgia, personal experience, inspirational.

### Due Dates Issue      Due Dates Issue

Jan. 7      January      April 1      April

Jan. 29      February      April 28      May

Feb. 28      March

The sooner I get these, the better.

Our program committee, under the leadership of Shirley Pelley, is providing excellent programs. Rebekah Dorris is arranging our Christmas program with non-music majors from SNU.

Our Research Interest Group, under the leadership of Jack Arnold, promises to be a strong motivational tool for outstanding contributions to the Academy and beyond. Roy Dorris will share some of his research in pharmacy at the January meeting.

Our callers are doing a terrific job. Our ad council helps keep everything running smooth. And Elbert is always there for us.

Welcome home, travelers! We miss you when you're gone. But we understand that's one reason you retired, to travel. All we ask is that you share your adventures through the Perspective.

Art and I wish for each of you a very blessed Christmas season and a New Year filled with good things.

## HERZLICHE WEIHNACHTSGRUSSE!

by Maurine Dickerson

My first Christmas in Switzerland was a memorable one. It was in 1977 when I was on Sabbatical from MANC to ENBC in Büssingen, Germany, an enclave located within the Swiss borders. One Sunday afternoon I was invited, along with other, to have coffee and pastry with a Swiss family in their home.

We had hardly taken off our coats until we were called to bundle up again and go outside to the patio for a surprise. As we approached the corner of the house, we heard an unfamiliar sound. Rounding the corner, there we saw three Swiss men, attired in Swiss national clothing - lederhosen, colorful vests, and caps - playing the Christmas carol "Silent Night" on the Alp horns. Such a beautiful, mournful sound I'd never heard before. The day was a dreary, misty one which added to the eerie atmosphere. I felt a lump in my throat; it was an experience I'll never forget.

Later that evening we went to the Free Evangelical Church where on the platform was a huge tree, completely lighted with real glowing candles. Near the tree sat a fellow with a bucket of water in case the tree and candles got out of control.

In December 1988, it was about eight months after my mother had died, and the sadness of being away from home seemed to bear in on me. As Christmas drew nearer, the gloom deepened. Fortunately, the opportunity came to travel by bus to a small village in Austria called Oberndorf, where "Silent Night" was composed and first sung on Christmas Eve, 1818.

As we traveled toward Oberndorf, all the world was white and smelled of pine and cedar. Before reaching Oberndorf, we spent the night in a large hotel on the outskirts of a small village. That evening we saw a huge star which seemed to be suspended from the sky. My friend and I walked towards the star, every step crunching through the beautiful deep snow. The farther we walked, the farther away the star seemed to be. But it beckoned and we kept walking. We were rewarded as we looked up at its mammoth man-made shape and thought of the real star in the sky on the night of Christ's birth.

The next day when we reached Oberndorf, snow was falling lightly. We left the bus and walked on cobblestone streets covered with snow towards the small white church. Villagers and tourists were arriving, strolling arm in arm, a European custom. We had to take turns entering the church because it was so small. There in that tiny church a sense of reverence hovered over us, a feeling of welcoming the Christ child into His world: "Silent Night, Holy Night."

Other unforgettable Christmas seasons in Europe are also memorable:

.....the beautiful life-sized nativity scenes in Salzburg, Austria; Schaffhausen, Switzerland, and Munich and Nurnberg in Germany.

.....Christkindemarkt in Munich and Nurnberg where one experiences traditional Christmas fair.

.....the castle about four miles from ENBC which turns into a fairy land during December. Outside and inside the brick walls which surround the castle are many, many large artificial trees which have been sprayed white and decorated with hundreds of white electric lights. The frost on the natural trees provides a winder wonder land. To make the evening complete, one must go inside the castle for coffee and cake.

.....a train trip to Vienna, Austria, where we took a horse and buggy ride on the cobbled stones of this old city, passing Santa Clauses (Father Christmas) leading their donkeys through the streets and handing out goodies for the children. The highlight of this trip was the Vienna Boys' Choir concert in Burgkappelle. What did they sing? "Silent Night, Holy Night," of course.

.....a treat on Christmas Eve in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, near ENBC, is the concert and the lighting of the Christmas tree in the Munster, the State Church. If you can imagine the height from the floor to the ceiling in these old churches and a Christmas tree (decorated with real candles) which almost reaches the ceiling, you can feel the excitement as everyone waits for the candles to be lighted. The moment comes - there is a wish and a gasp from the audience. The tree is sparkling!

I leave you with these memorable moments of Christmases in Europe and a song in the heart, "Silent Night, Holy Night."

## THE FUTURE OF BOOKS AND COMPUTERS IN LIBRARIES

by Bea Flinner

Are books in libraries becoming obsolete because of computers? With the popularity and availability of computers, there is a popular belief that print materials, including books and journals, are in the fast-moving traffic lane and will end up in oblivion. Computers abound in our libraries, in dormitory rooms, in business and other places. This modern-day invention allows access to the Internet where knowledge first makes its appearance.

If one is fortunate, communication can be carried out almost immediately, worldwide, if necessary. Research can be done extensively: communication is fast and inexpensive, any topic can be searched, some books can be accessed in full-text, a number of journals are available, and statistics can be found on numerous topics. The list of possibilities is, without a doubt, endless. Scholars are excited about the possibilities of research via the Internet. From numerous Web sites books and periodicals can be downloaded.

Another fact of computer technology is the area of CD-Roms. A vast number of programs can be accessed, including the card-catalog on-line, databases such as ERIC (Educational Research Information Center), OCLC, Proquest and others. Abstracts and frequently full-text articles are to be found. Bibliographies can be compiled using a computer.

But does all of this modern technology mean that books have lost their places in our academic libraries, public libraries, hospital libraries--and even our homes? There are, and always will be, those who will answer this question in the negative. While many librarians feel that computer technology is wonderful, many are feeling stress because of the rapid changes, as well as coping with the decisions made by educational policy makers.

There is a massive move on right now to build libraries. In New York, Chicago, Denver, Phoenix, San Francisco, and San Antonio there have been libraries built in the last five years. In London, Tokyo and Paris the picture has been the same (Dallas Morning News, 1996). The question may be asked as to why money is being spent on these new buildings, and Marilyn Mason, director of the Cleveland Public Library, believes that if the computer access to a library is increased the conventional, walk-up use of print resources will also increase. She says that books and libraries are not going out of vogue; rather, libraries are becoming more connected, more adaptable, and more necessary as the result of the incorporation of computers (Dallas Morning News, 1996).

The co-author of *Future Libraries*, Walt Crawford, said that libraries today, both public and academic, are having big success, and the demand has exploded. He is of the opinion that this is due to how well the computer services have been integrated into the print resources (Dallas Morning News, 1996).

While there can be no doubt that computers have revolutionized much of the world, there are some drawbacks. All libraries (academic and public) do not have computer capability. For those who do have, there may be problems of not having enough stations to service the clientele, which can cause frustration because of long lines, perhaps sign-up sheets, and/or the time limitations placed on computer use. One of the most exasperating situations is caused when the entire system goes down and the students have impending assignments. Do professors always take this problem into consideration when students come to class the next day with an uncompleted assignment?

Another possible problem may be eye-strain brought about by long periods of looking at the computer screen. If one is scrolling through a long article, or perhaps a book, the task becomes quite tedious. Walt Crawford, who is a senior analyst at the Research Libraries Group, Inc. relates that people used to be willing to "read 20 screens" worth of information before printing it out. Now it is three. (Dallas Morning News, 1996). Because of this change, if something is worth reading, it is printed out.

One of the potential problems created by the wonderful world of E-Mail, accessed via the computer, may be the cost to the user. While some libraries may offer this service without charge, there may be situations where the concept of "free libraries" will be challenged. Hardware and software are extremely expensive acquisitions. This is a problem that has hit the budgets of many colleges with a thud. Frequently there is not enough memory, so there must be constant updates in this area. Increasing costs pose another problem. Also, one must not forget the almost constant maintenance involved on a campus that is computerized, even in a minimal way.

Another area in which the impact of computer use may be heavily felt is the Interlibrary Loan Department. Many of the materials will need to be requested from other libraries. This may mean employing more personnel in that department.

This is all good, but thoughts need to turn now to the "book." Will the use of computers cause young children to be deprived of reading books--a love that should continue throughout their lives? Scrolling through a book the "technology way" may not be as produc-

tive; rather, it may simply be tedious. It is highly unlikely that people, including children, will care to read books on-line for relaxation. In addition, there are people who live in rural areas, are hospitalized, or who must get their reading materials from a public library--places where there are no computers. But, they will delight in being able to read the print materials.

There is no doubt that the computer has done much to revolutionize reading, research, class assignments, and quick access to information. But, while it is possible to take a laptop to the beach for "relaxing reading," it seems more feasible and more pleasurable to take a book. How nice it is to keep a stack of books on one's desk--or even on the nightstand to get in a few minutes of reading. What about reading while on an airplane, being a passenger in a car or taking a trip by bus or train--or even a boat! No clicking of keys--just the soft turning of pages.

"Flipping" through a book is part of the "book" experience. There are many times when it is so much quicker to go directly to a reference book for needed information than to get on the Internet, locate the proper search engine, make your selection and print out the information sought.

Judging from a search of the literature, it certainly does not look as though the book is going out of the picture. Publishers continue to publish books, and people continue to purchase them. Those who say that the book will become obsolete are primarily those who are into technology in a "big" way.

There is a negative side to the use of computers by students, which has been observed many times. Frequently the trend is to hurry to the library, access information via the computer, print it out--and write a paper. Many times there is very little time spent in true research, and because the computers do not have all the answers, the students are really cheating themselves. There is also so much information available in the print materials (books, periodicals, reference books). One must be selective on the Internet, due to the vast amount of information, and this takes time. However, by combining both mediums, a paper can write an excellent paper.

A consensus among some of the authors researched for this article is that the book and the computer definitely complement each other, and that trying to change this concept "wastes resources and time, endangers library budgets and imperils historic collections" (Dallas Morning News, 1996).

The statement could have been made at the onset of this article to the effect that no one knows the answer to the question as to whether or not the book is destined to die--or whether the book and the computer will com-

plement each other. Even though some libraries are using technology expensively, they are still purchasing "how-to" books on how to use computers. Lowell Martin said the "the book still plays a central role in educational communication, and will continue to do so in these next years" (Library Journal, 1994).

#### References

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Weeks, Jerome. The Future Is An Open Book (November 3, 1996). The Dallas Morning News, Section J.

#### A CHRISTMAS FANTASY

(Or: A Sermon by Any Other Name is Still a Sermon.)

by Bob Troutman

Scene: Unidentified Person at table, wrapping Christmas gifts. Litter scattered on table and floor.

.....

SPRIT OF CHRISTMAS GIVING (weak voice):  
Help! Somebody help me.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON (startled) What?  
Who's There?

CS: Help! Please help me.

UP: How can I? I can't see you.

CS: Move that red bow a bit. There, that's better.

UP: For you maybe, but I still can't see you. Who are you? And what are you doing here?

CS: Of course you can't see me. I'm a spirit--the Spirit of Christmas giving. We need to talk.

UP: It's a little hard to talk to someone I can't see, but I'll give it a try. What do you want to talk about?

CS: You don't catch on very quickly, do you? What would the Spirit of Christmas Giving want to talk about? Maybe, giving in the spirit of Christmas?

UP: Now, wait a minute! Look at this gift list. It ought to be in the Guinness Book of Records. Two grandmas, one grandpa, seven aunts and uncles, more cousins than I can count--some I've never even seen--plus friends at work and church. You don't need to talk to me about Christmas giving.

CS: Forget your gift list. Let's talk about giving in the spirit of Christmas.

UP: Giving at Christmas and giving in the spirit of Christmas--what's the difference?

CS: Did you really graduate from SNU? There's a big difference. You can give for a lot of different reasons--like so you'll get a gift in return. (UP winces.) I see you know something about that. Well, why do we have Christmas?

UP: To commemorate the birthday of Jesus--to honor Him.

CS: Right! Maybe SNU didn't do such a bad job after all. Then shouldn't what we do to honor Him be done with a spirit like His?

UP: Well sure. But enough theory--get practical. And remember, my bank account won't stand much more.

CS: For starters, how about taking a plate of goodies to your neighbor across the street? You already have them baked so it wouldn't take much time--and no more money.

UP: That doesn't seem like I'd be doing much.

CS: Remember what Jesus said about giving a cup of water in His name?

UP: I remember. But I wouldn't know what to take her. She's at least 75--probably has to eat pretty bland food. People at church rave about my molasses cookies, but they'd probably be too spicy for her. Maybe my soft sugar cookies.

CS: I'm sure she'd like the sugar cookies.

UP: And since you've brought up scripture, what about that verse that says it's more blessed to give than to receive?

CS: I know the verse, but I don't get the question.

UP: Well, if some people are going to be blessed by giving, doesn't someone have to receive?

CS: Oh, I get it. You mean you're willing to be a receiver so others can be blessed by giving to you? Nice try--but I don't think that's what the verse means. The blessing goes to the giver, not the receiver.

UP: Oh, all right. Got any other suggestions for giving--really practical things?

CS: That young single mother down the street could use a break now and then. You could send her a card with a note offering to watch her children one day a month.

UP: That might not be too bad--except for that two-year-old. You know what they say about the terrible twos. Of course, my children were never that way, and my two-year-old grandson's a real joy.

CS: I'm sure he is. Maybe you could take some toys to help entertain the children. And some cookies would be good. I'm sure the kids could handle your famous molasses ones.

UP: You've really got a thing about cookies, haven't you? Didn't your mother bake cookies? But it's a good idea. It's funny, but just thinking about doing something like that for someone I don't know very well makes me feel good inside. And you know what? Next Sunday I'm going to take an angel off the Angel Tree at church. Oh, and our LINKS missionary's having a birthday next month. I'll send a card and a note of encouragement. Might even put in a picture of my grandson.

CS: Now you're getting the spirit of Christmas giving! Well, I need to get over to the meeting of the Association of Senior Professionals. Those people know what giving in the spirit of Christmas means. Still, it never hurts to check up on things now and then. See you!

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