

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE
Olympia, Washington 98501
Library Group Position Paper No. 5
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C O N T E N T S

Introduction	TRIBAL LETTER ONE in which Tim Moffatt really says it all if you are listening
The rest of it	TRIBAL PROCESSES AT EVERGREEN
Coda	THE TOMORROW PEOPLE, Karl Nyren

TRIBAL LETTER

ONE

I see rhythms and singing in your words

I see celebration and joy

Together we are each ourselves together

dancing

speaking of life

together we are ourselves

apart

we were

not ourselves

in community lies

individual identity

in bureaucracy

loneliness.

Let us help our friends

to dance

Tim

TRIBAL PROCESSES AT EVERGREEN

Sid White, Willi Unsoeld, Joe Shoben and others triggered, one Friday morning in the faculty conference room (6 November 1970), this response to a long past deadline. Many frustrations were surfacing. Unsoeld in summary, noted the development of a strong bilateral trend in somewhat hazy problem-solving and decision-making areas of the college particularly on hiring practices, and suggested a one family approach might be better.

Lacking more than superficial knowledge of any tribe, but with a gut awareness of the possibilities of a tribal approach to our enterprise let me push on with some comments, questions and suggestions about tribal processes at Evergreen. My intention is not to provide easy answers but to make a start at getting things together. Dropped into this position paper from time to time is an arcane and cautionary abbreviation--LNPTATF.* Or more boldly and briefly--LPLF.**

Under the rubrics provided (there are many more, of course) I am trying to provoke consideration, discussion, elaboration, response, and most of all tribal process commitments.

There is space also for your reactions as you read if you continue to read beyond this point.

"Tribal" processes as a convenient handle also lends itself to abbreviation because of the constant repetition throughout. For obvious reasons I have not done so. "Clan" processes might have been used as an alternative but there are current negative connotations of the word however spelled,--clannishness, secretiveness, initiations, discrimination, and Mafia-like overtones. "Tribal" on the other hand is a relatively clean and more open word onto which we can hang fresh Evergreen meanings.

Throughout I assume that every person at Evergreen is a member of the tribe without qualification and I blanket in every student, our reason for being in the first place. I do this without reservation, with no hurdles to be cleared other than to get here. No farm system, no tenderfoot status, no credentials other than to be here. (LPLH).

When might the tribe have begun? (We know it is non-existent now.) Perhaps with the advisory group gathered together by Charles McCann at the beginning of 1969, perhaps even earlier but certainly not with the architectural planners and the A.D. Little planners. Excepting possibly Roger Malek they were and are alien to tribal processes.

** Let's not push this analogy too far!*

***Let's push like hell.*

But many of the advisory group still should be tribal members involved in tribal processes, and we should go back to the documents generated by and for them. Another possible beginning occurred in early February and we again should reach back for Charles McCann's "Introductory Remarks for Planning, Phase II" of 8 February 1970, if we are in search of a history.

I have deliberately avoided defining tribal processes because it would be presumptuous as well as categorical. Such definition if we must have definition is part of the process itself and tribal not individual.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

A Variety of Languages (LNPTATF)

In many ways we speak a common language yet we often fail in communication through use of freighted or sometimes empty words. Each of us also uses specialized languages which compound our problems in communication. Too often we shrug off responsibility as the fault of the other person and chug along getting what we can, even taking advantage of the communication failure. Under tribal processes, won't we find ways to more complete understanding on better accomplishment of whatever tribal objectives we set?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Lack of Homogeneity

As we have a variety of languages so we have many different persons gathered together in the tribe. Their values as persons increases as we avoid a massaging, homogenizing phenomenon. Do the tribal processes gain power as we bring diverse interests, pluralistic approaches and expansive notions to our work and play?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Size

Evergreen, as a public institution is committed to an unprecedented growth as far as this state is concerned. How do we continue tribal processes against the known forces of depersonalization which will be operative? Will size eventually bring about the disappearance of the tribe? (LNPTATF)

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Getting Crunchy Quickly

First efforts at academic curriculum planning have brought out clearly to those at work the almost frightening personal commitment of those conventionally involved directly in learning experiences. Is this a burden that "discretionary professionals" alone can carry? Are we falling into the Platonian trap of limiting communication (learning?) to what the "teacher" already knows? Where does this leave the "students" in our tribe? Where is our scepticism? (See Daniel Gore's "Against the Dogmatists: A Sceptical View of Libraries," American Libraries, November 1970, pp 953-959.) (LPLH)

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Titles and Castes (LNPTATF?)

Should titles be for external use only? Within the tribe, can we continue primarily on a first-name basis which when used honestly with respect for each other, not in condescension, breaks down many potential barriers and eases communications? For the shy, sly, and diffident, are not Mr. and Ms. sufficient? Will we generate our own special terms of veneration such as pappa-san, mama-san, uncle, aunt, and so on? Will tribal processes bring out greater emphasis on demonstrated competencies and concerns rather than assuming their existence under a credentialism approach that is becoming generally suspect?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Who Recruits?

We all should. At the same time we also know the outside world expects us to preserve outwardly a respect for titles and credentials. Can we through tribal processes all recruit and yet keep as outward symbols those categories in which we serve--classified, administrative exempt, faculty, etc?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Gatherers and Grinders as Well as Hunters

In the tribe, there are many essential tasks. Under tribal concepts is it necessary to make all these tasks fit a hierarchic structure? Can all tasks and chores be performed by members of the tribe as they bring their talents into tribal processes? Will tribal processes help avoid the exploitation of some by others? (LNPTATF)

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Conservation of Resources (LPLH)

The budget is bringing home to us all too clearly our limited resources. Will tribal processes help us to remember that any resources, natural, persons, even books, are limited and must be conserved (not stored or misused either). Through tribal processes can we draw ourselves together in making the best use, under circumstances set from within and without, of what we have and what we can scrounge?

We need badly then some widely distributed inventories of resources available:

- of people resources within and outside the tribe
- of materials free and inexpensive as well as costly
- of equipment
- of natural and manmade spaces
- of display areas, indoors and outdoors, on-campus and off-campus
- etc., etc., etc.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

A Capacity for Discovery and Invention (LPLH)

Not living in the best of all possible worlds (we came from that world didn't we?) and with the known and unknown constraints which will be operative, can we then through tribal processes encourage and expand our capacities for discovery and invention? How close to disfunctional can we approach and still survive imaginatively through improvisations? Can negotiable and renegotiable contracts encourage discovery and invention? Can we say yes if they are not rigid, not one way, and always renegotiable?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Self-Destruct Mechanisms

Will tribal processes give us the grace and wisdom to cast off developing bureaucratic encrustations before they can hamper the tribe? Will we be able to avoid unintentional self-destructs for intended and thriving actions and apply intended self-destructs to those actions found purposeless or disfunctional by tribal processes? (LPLH on this in the face of our growth.)

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Struggle for Survival

Can tribal processes provide us with the best means of survival?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Outside Financial Support

Public budget support will always be limited and we must seek support from federal agencies, foundations and private sources for many tribal functions. How do we keep these additional resources tribal and not personal or separative? Academic institutions for years have creamed off larger and larger arbitrary percentages for "administrative overhead costs." Is this acceptable? In development of grant and other funding proposals, should we not first determine if a proposal advances tribal objectives? For example, should a portion of a grant proposal for major equipment, or project, or activity not include built-in longrange costs to the tribe for effectively exploiting that additional capability, including people costs and other resources required for advancing institutional objectives determined through tribal processes? We may pledge support to tribal concerns but our practices often deny our pledges, intentionally, or not.

Reaction. 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Borrowing and Sharing

Is borrowing and sharing limited to the hard-scrabble times? I think not. In tribal processes it is a way of life, indicating the relative importance of persons and things. (LNPTATF)

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursua this.

Rhythms of Work and Play

Conventionally, we think in terms of the Protestant ethic of work as good whether it has meaning or not. We destroy natural rhythms to fit an unnatural 8 AM-5 PM five day week. Will tribal processes bring joy to meaningful work, remove the guilt feelings of play, and bring out the relationship and individuality of each person's work-play pattern?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Trust (LPLH)

Speaking of tribes, I saw the Chicago and Seattle companies give very different and very exciting performances of "Hair". Aside from the basic health and wholesomeness of the show I was impressed by the sense of sharing which permeated entirely the two casts. I have some awareness of the egocentric nature of entertainers particularly in the theater. It's a dog-eat-dog racket. But this was absent from "Hair". There was a shared joy in putting it together, regardless of who happened to be in a spot at a given instant. Will tribal processes help us to do as much?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Women's Liberation (LPLH)

We're reaching out for brothers and sisters, belatedly according to some, too soon according to others. Will tribal processes help us to rid ourselves of male arrogance and racial prejudices, both often unrecognized by those of us whose cultural backgrounds have built in such attitudes as normative?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Motivation

Will tribal processes help us to recognize that motivation primarily comes through involvement which sustains commitment? Commitment hopefully comes first but may come only after substantial involvement. In the latter situation is "entrapment" a responsible effort?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Options and Decisions

At any given moment we may have certain options. Will tribal processes help us to uncover all the options to arrive at the best decisions? Will the same processes help us to arrive at better decisions as new options are uncovered? Most important, will tribal processes best prepare us to live with the consequences of our actions and decisions?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Things Done and Things Left Undone (LNPTATF)

Will tribal processes help us sort out our priorities in getting done those things and tasks which must be done, and set aside those things and tasks which are better left undone regardless of outside pressures and selfish personal concerns?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Other Tribes (LNPTATF)

We cannot operate in isolation nor in an ivory tower nor do we live under Shelley's "dome of many-coloured glass". Will tribal processes best prepare us to cope with other tribes, friendly and unfriendly, or those still uncertain of us? How do we best relate our purposes to those of the Council on Higher Education, other universities and colleges, the community colleges, the high schools, the legislature, the state and federal governments, and all the other tribes about us?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Our One Unique Characteristic (LNPTATF)

The possibility of involvement of the whole enterprise in seeking reform, improvement and change in higher education is Evergreen's one unique characteristic. By acting on this challenge with all our resources we avoid the threat to the institutions as well as the familiar patterns of operation so often encountered by those exceptional persons who seek change within existing institutions. Because of the threat of unwanted change the more successful such a person is the less likely he is to receive continuing institutional support or to have his ideas accepted by his peers. Will tribal processes help achieve institutional objectives at Evergreen?

So far there has been a lot of brave rhetoric, more brave at the beginning, with little worked out much less set down in the way of specific educational and behavioral objectives. Can we proceed without such clarification on a tribal basis? How long will the rhetoric, obviously interpreted in many different ways, and obviously powerful enough to pull many of us here initially, continue or can be expected to fulfill any cementing actions?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Processes and Control

For the reader who is more interested in control, professional objectives, and individual objectives than in process, I doubt that any statistics or arguments or reasons can be marshalled to convince him or her otherwise. Again, I go back to my gut reaction that our fulfillment as an educational enterprise may well depend on how willing we are to develop our own tribal processes. I accept no process as valid which intentionally or unintentionally leads to depersonalization at any level. But perhaps our personal fulfillment also comes through our involvement with each other in commonly derived and accepted processes continued only so long as they have meaning and relevance. Is it too much to hope that such tribal processes can be exponentially more powerful than individualized power?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Learning and Teaching

We all learn and we all teach. Is there any other safe assumption? But no two learn or teach in exactly the same way or at any given level of effectiveness that can be sustained evenly or even predictably. How can the potential interests and capabilities of every one in the tribe be strengthened and brought into focus, then committed to tribal objectives? Under tribal processes can we honestly speak of ancillary functions supporting the "academic mainstream"? Can such ancillary functions be defined? What elements of "elitism" may develop?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3. File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIPS (LPLH)

"One family" approaches may be as easily authoritarian as collaborative group processes. In a tribal approach a full participatory involvement can from the beginning be a part of the process. Who is a colleague? He is the person with whom one works toward mutually agreed upon objectives. In tribal processes, whatever the outside labels and insignia, they are persons working as well upon accepted tribal (institutional) objectives, whether "teacher", "student", "typist", "printer", "artist", administrator", or what have you. They are colleagues, some with more expertise, some with less, some clumsy, some adept, some lazy, some eager, some brilliant, some pedestrian, and so on, but all having common tribal awareness and understanding. Under such conditions there are of course many blurred edges and overlaps in personal relationships but the relationships themselves are real and may produce tremendous personal commitments.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3. File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Educational Rigor Mortis (LNPTATF)

Many of us are all too familiar with this phenomenon through first-hand experiences and through the adventures and misadventures of friends and associates. We also know first-hand the ease with which persons (and

institutions) succumb to the predictable and on-the-surface comfortable ways of life at any institution, maturely or prematurely so done in. Tribal processes should help to avoid or put off such an untimely development and some of us always have the option to return to such an environment if we tire of tribal living or really prefer living in a cemetery.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Leaving the Reservation (LNPTATF)

Many are here as escapees from a variety of academic reservations. We must guard against previous environmental conditioning. Let us not close ourselves yet again within a reservation imposed from within or outside the tribe.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Remembrance of Past Sins (LNPTATF)

Let the reader deal with issue as he or she sees fit.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Irritations and Frustrations (LPLH)

Willi Unsoeld suggests that we keep track of our levels of irritation and frustration. How do we monitor and deal with these aspects of reality within tribal processes?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Turf (LNPTATF)

Within a tribe, there should seldom if ever be a necessity for claiming exclusive use of a particular area or facility. Some areas lend themselves best to certain functions, such as toilets and kitchens, but even here, common and unusual needs are met for all as needs arise, and cannot be staked out for exclusive use. How do we avoid attitudes which tend to encourage preemptive action?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Tribelets (LNPTATF)

Are tribelets, a possible function of growth, a necessary part of tribes and how will tribal processes encourage their development if necessary or desirable? What is the relationship of tribelets to accelerated growth and to size? How can they be used, within tribal processes, to maintain human proportions?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Organizational Charts (LNPTATF)

A four-letter word, if they are taken too seriously by, or imposed on, the tribe.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Verticals and Horizontals

Participatory tribal processes should blur the vertical lines of conventional organization, multiplying the horizontals, and the "slaunch-wise" paths of communication!

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Open and Closed Meetings

The library group meets regularly at 10:00 AM on Mondays. These meetings are always open and any member of the tribe is welcome as a participant or observer. The in-house seminars are similarly open. Are other groups meeting in the same fashion? If not, why not? Are "executive" sessions necessary in tribal processes?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Planning (LPLH)

Who should be involved in planning? Those who are responsible for the execution? Why? Who? When? How is planning held within the context of tribal processes? As the Friday meeting indicated present practices are sowing seeds of bitterness and misunderstanding which if germinated will produce an unwanted harvest.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Decision-Making

Will tribal processes cause decision-making to be a natural outgrowth of planning or will decisions be made in other less desirable ways?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Powwows and President's Council (LNPTATF)

If you have read this far, then you must have some glorious reactions to such a topic.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Potlatches (LNPTATF)

Not directly related to powwows and the President's Council but of major concern to tribal processes--we must have ways of giving ourselves and our treasures to others without being self-serving and ostentatious, and without destroying ourselves.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

The Tribe's Library

There is a plethora of literature on the use and misuse of libraries, librarians, and readers. Much of it has little significance to tribal processes at Evergreen if we accept tribal processes which would remove many of the common causes in other institutions which provoke irritation, controversy and antagonistic relationships between bookies and academicians. We are all too familiar with the protectiveness of librarians, the provoked ruthlessness of students, and the sometimes calculated indifference of researchers and teachers. Meanwhile, in other institutions administrators have been pouring bucks into their libraries from capital and operating resources, sometimes stingily, often generously, but almost universally without thought to what they were getting in other than physical terms. There is little concern to the payoffs, the uses of the library beyond having enough resources available to keep publishing scholars and their coteries of graduate students a step this side of departure for greener pastures. Meanwhile, who gets shafted? The undergraduates, the teachers, and the librarians. Will tribal processes help prevent anyone and everyone from being shafted at Evergreen? Can both broad-gauge cultural situations and primary learning situations occur in and about the library if they develop through tribal processes? Why not?

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Gathering Resources

Perhaps our first effort to build up library resources should have been based on the Whole Earth Catalog instead of Books for College Libraries!

Forgive me--I lacked the foresight and courage to act on such a commitment at the beginning but it's not too late to recover on that and other similar resource documents.

I am reluctant even to think of the library in hardened and dimensioned physical terms much less spell the word with a capital "L". I think of it in an organic way gaining its life from the involvement of persons in the past, in the present, and in the future. Its climate is a tribal climate. If indeed the curriculum is the whole course to be run by our tribe, then can the library's involvement be in any way ancillary or adjunctive?

Assuming that through tribal processes we bring together the broadest and most exciting inventory of resources of all kinds in the library then reach out into the world for more, and that we continue to attract as lively persons to that area as have been gathered temporarily in building 213 and elsewhere, can we get a more worthy involvement of the library in its most generic sense? I hope so, and these may yet be thought of later as halcyon days, now unrecognized.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Information Transfer and Exchange (LPLH)

Jack Eyerly had exciting ideas on library potentials in this area of intercourse from simple to complex in execution and so have I and others. Tribal processes can be encouraged by such efforts. Parenthetically, Jack will be in the tribe in many manifestations directly and indirectly! If there is no tribe, there are unlikely to be many Eyerlys.

Reaction: 1.Preposterous. 2.Let's wait. 3.File 13. 4.Let's pursue this.

Involvement and Climate

Involvement comes through tribal commitment. Comfort and accessibility make involvement easier. The library must be comfortable in a variety

of ways and possessed by the tribe. There must be individual and group opportunities for all sorts of hands-on experiences. The involvement must be interactive--no one particularly enjoys being a missionary within the tribe but rather should be a colleague helping create an environment in which many varieties of experience can happen--and that is a climate which can come about through tribal processes. Eager beavers will respond predictably in such a climate and often do so in less favorable climates. Here there will also be encouragement for involvement of the spectator, the uncommitted and the alienated.

Early on, we offered alternatives in several position papers. The current college budget proposal provides more detailed and somewhat more specific suggestions, hopefully appealing to those who respond to budget proposals. Because of timing and limited distribution, these statements not only brought practically no response, but also had little impact on the ad hoc decision-making of the past year. Library services are still demonstrably regarded as ancillary, adjunctive and peripheral to the academic mainstream.

Perhaps the best starting point now for introducing library services into tribal processes is to start with Joe Shoben's statement of 19 January 1970, "Some Thoughts on Evergreen's Library", which is much more articulate and provocative than anything I can offer. I can provide a copy to every person concerned who has not read it or who has lost his or her copy. To my knowledge, his paper also has provoked little response and serious consideration is long overdue. Can this be a starting for tribal processes? Who wants to help start the revolution? (LPLH).

A handwritten signature, possibly "LPLH", written in dark ink. The signature is somewhat stylized and appears to be a series of connected loops and lines.

CODA

"The Tomorrow People" by Karl Nyren

I believe in rainfall and sunshine, the seasons, birth and growth and rot and death, God, love, Murphy's law, and maybe more other phenomena than I doubt, but most of all, I believe in serendipity. That is, the good unexpected must always be reckoned with, as well as the possibility of failure and the certainty of evil and many bad events and things.

Sunday afternoon, 15 November, in the quiet of my office I read over Pat Baugh's final typing of this position paper. She had done it good, and I was finished with the whole schmeer. Sunday evening, in the quiet of the home stool, I opened for the first time the 15 October 1970 issue of the Library Journal. There I discovered Karl Nyren's editorial.

Karl and Tim are both tomorrow people and will always find a tribe. Because Xerox owns Bowker, and Evergreen has a Xerox, I have made Karl's editorial an essential part of this position paper! jfh

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

Winter is upon us again, bringing regret for what we have not done with our year, mingled regret and anticipation as we wade down into another season. The eyes of the tomorrow people among us—both the young ones and those old ones immune to atrophy of the heart—these eyes fix us with the same question they have held since a year ago last Summer in Atlantic City: Where do we go from here?

As Gerard Salton says so aptly in the lead article of this *LJ*, "The first order of business must not be the introduction of new equipment and methodology, but rather a re-evaluation of the aims and standards of the library in the modern world."

A tall order, yet one which may be stalked from many different directions. One might be to consider the library and the librarian in the context of some of the other groups with which they interact. Librarians are a tribe living in a territory bordering that of many other tribes, all of whom have some commerce with them. The question then is, what is this tribe of ours, and what is it up to in the world?

All tribes have their allotted lands. The healers hold sway over the swamps of illness and are licensed to guide us through these noxious regions. The enforcers rule those broad plains where harm is dispensed in the interest of general safety. Dancers, mimes, and singers cultivate the fields of joy and woe. And the buriers ride herd on the nitrogen cycle in their black Cadillacs. They all exact pretty heavy tribute from the rest of us, considering everything, but as long as there is no unseemly collaboration among them, we put up with things. It makes it easier to look tolerantly at our own tribe.

Who are we? Keepers of books once, but now, except for a few unreconstructed ones in the hills, far removed from the life of lovely bindings, from ancient ink on ancient paper. Today, we are a community of large and varied population—a sort of country in time, with our own Frontiers, Population Concentrations, Principal Products, and indeed as real an existence as those geographical abstractions we normally call "countries."

Consider our topography: frontiers impinge on a Balkan host of neighbors—government, publishers, educators, booksellers, furniture and equipment makers, television and film people, dealers in magazines, varied packagers and repackagers of information, computer wizards, and research scientists. All these tribes live to some extent off the meagre rainfall of money on our territory—but in return, they perform services essential to us. And sometimes they give us good jobs when we wetback it over the border in search of greener grass.

Our population is found in distinct areas, separated by mountainous barriers. These areas are inhabited by the Academic, Public, School, and Special Library tribes; within each, separated by scarcely less passable natural barriers, are the enclaves of adminis-



EDITORIAL

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trators, catalogers, children's specialists, bibliographers, and others, down to the tiny pockets in the crevasses where we find the systems analysts, documentalists, journalists, public relations people, social workers, and other dropouts from strange tribes who have been benighted in our country.

Communications in this land are difficult and poorly developed. There are annual potlatches, and beyond that, the smoke signals of articles and reports which too often make better historical evidence than news by the time they appear.

Our Principal Products are not extensive, what with the dearth of rainfall. But in all areas of the land we produce and maintain goodly numbers of librarians—plus their wives, children, dogs, and power mowers. This activity uses up the largest proportion of the money which rains on our country.

With what is left, we make crops of books and other learning materials—usually only after we have turned out our quotas of buildings, furniture, parking lots, date stamps, and catalog cards. And finally, we are one of the countries which handle Information and Knowledge, which can be distilled to yield Understanding, besides which everything else is properly considered as a byproduct. Very little of it is produced anywhere, despite the great need for it. Need and demand, of course are two different things. And that brings us to the question of priorities in our country.

The tomorrow people, both those in our country and their brothers and sisters in all countries, are hungry for understanding. To really live up to our "national" priority, which is the production of understanding, may mean cutting down on some of our more plentiful byproducts. KN