

Editor's Column: A Veritable Banquet

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Since its inception, *Codex* has frankly struggled chronically with low submission numbers. I've never been sure if it's the "Journal of the Louisiana Chapter of the ACRL" that throws people off, or if that's simply the nature of the beast for a small, low-profile open access journal, regardless of its peer-reviewed status. *Codex* is not alone in that struggle. It seems that other state publications, such as *Louisiana Libraries* (which is published by the Louisiana Library Association), also struggle to obtain a meaningful amount of submissions. What we receive is quality – we just can't seem to nail *quantity*.

However, for this issue, we got *lucky*. We got both *quality* and *quantity*. This issue has seven articles! The early days of the journal had similar numbers. Since then, the journal has averaged about 3-4 articles per issue. Having seven articles feels like a good omen – perhaps the tide is finally turning for small journals like this one. I hope that we can sustain such numbers and even expand in the future!

One thing that I think will help is that the journal's parent organization, the ACRL-LA, partnered with the Academic Section of the Louisiana Library Association (LLA) to pilot a virtual conference – the Louisiana Virtual Academic Conference. Held entirely online using Zoom, the conference took place on November 15, 2018, and had over 100 attendees. The conference planners, who included members of both organizations including Celise Reech-Harper, editor of *Louisiana Libraries*, and myself,

were very excited about this opportunity to provide affordable professional development and outreach to librarians in and beyond Louisiana. The conference featured four major tracks – Instruction, Public Services, Scholarly Activities, and Technical Services. Much of the Scholarly Activities track focused on publishing and publishing opportunities within the profession. Celise and I hosted a session on our respective publications, including how to publish and how to get involved beyond just writing.

Such opportunities are excellent for generating discussion, but they also represent chances to talk about different types of publishing; how to navigate the publishing process; and how to encourage new authors and researchers to share and promote their work. That last part is key: getting new librarians and library professionals to believe that they have something to say that others want and need to hear. It can be intimidating when one is just embarking on one's career to add one's voice to the mix. In the course of my first job out of library school, I approached my department head about presenting at the state conference. She looked me dead in the eye and scoffed, "You're new here. Who gives a damn about anything you have to say?" Given that work environment – which is a story for another time – I demurred. Unfortunately, her answer and my experience are not uncommon.

When I escaped to Louisiana and asked the dean at my new library about presenting at a state conference, his response was to the effect of "By all means! It's important for early career librarians to get as much experience as they can!" The distinct differences in leadership style made the difference in my career – the dean's support meant that I always felt like anything I wanted to try in terms of professional development or career development was fair game, including publication opportunities. I

think it is important to take my former dean's approach and encourage our colleagues – librarians and professionals alike – and library students to never be afraid to add their voices to the literature. What you have to say – and maybe even how you say it – enriches the literature, supplying dimension and detail to phenomena, practices, and problems that enhance our understanding and facilitate our pursuit of solutions. The writing and publishing process can be intimidating, but they can also be learned and conquered.

I've said this before, and I'll say it again: one of the reasons I started *Codex* was to demystify the publishing process for new authors and researchers, to give them a glimpse of what the process can be like, and to provide them with meaningful feedback to improve their writing and research. This remains a part of the ongoing mission and vision of the journal; it is still as important today as it was in 2010 when the journal launched. I can never guarantee that if you submit to *Codex* that you'll get published – but I can guarantee that you will get feedback on how to improve your work. I can guarantee that your submission will be peer reviewed by professionals in the field. I can guarantee that if you never submit or get involved, you'll never get published or learn about the publishing process.

So, if you have an idea and you want to talk about it, reach out. If you have an article and you want to publish it, submit it. If you aren't ready to publish but you want to learn, volunteer to be a peer reviewer. These exhortations do not exclusively apply to *Codex* (though I want you to take them to heart for the journal) – they apply to *any* journal, publication, or website in which you might be interested, both in the field and on any topic in which you might be interested.

I am so grateful for all the authors who submitted to *Codex* for this issue. There is a diversity of topics: altmetrics, ebooks as course materials for student success, museum librarianship, roles for librarians in the French revitalization of Louisiana, instruction scheduling management, using Gimlet to track reference statistics, and using the Louisiana Digital Library as a data hub. While many of these are admittedly Louisiana-centric, they also represent trends, issues, and practices occurring in the larger contexts of libraries and librarianship. The research here can help Louisiana libraries, certainly – but they also represent ways of helping in the larger contexts of libraries and librarianship. Each of these articles presents professionals who have tackled some issue or challenge at their libraries and come away more knowledgeable, and in some cases with solutions, about those issues, challenges, themselves, and their libraries. All of this knowledge and information are valuable, and these authors and researchers have done a great service to the field by sharing that knowledge and information.

So, be inspired: be inspired to tackle a problem at your library – if you find a solution, write about it. If you fail to find a solution, still write about it, because failures help us learn, too. Be inspired to write about experiences you have had that you think will help others working in the field. Be inspired to get involved as a peer reviewer. Be inspired to do research; be inspired to write about it. Be inspired to add your voice to the ongoing discussion that is the professional literature and which forms our collective ongoing development as professionals.

And, of course, be inspired to submit to *Codex*! We need your content, your voice, to make what we're trying to do worthwhile. We need your research and writing to fuel this machine. We need your input to make this whole crazy machine go! And the

more of you that chime in, the more of you that submit, the more of you who learn and improve and volunteer and contribute to this journal, the better this journal will be – the more diverse its content, the richer the banquet for all who come to the table!