IN THE BEGINNING . . .

On the Founding of Judaica Librarianship

Bella Hass Weinberg, Editor

The major part of this issue is devoted to a celebration of the silver anniversary of the Association of Jewish Libraries. The articles commissioned by Guest Editor, Dr. Leonard Gold, contain many reminiscences about the founding and founders of AJL, as well as observations about our profession.

The editors of Judaica Librarianship also have cause for celebration—the conclusion of the journal's fifth volume. In her chronicle of AJL, Marcia Posner has documented the initiation of the journal as an AJL serial on the basis of statements published in the AJL Newsletter. The "prehistory" of Judaica Librarianship resides largely in my memory and personal archives, however. In this editorial, I reminisce about the founding of Judaica Librarianship, and assess the journal's role in AJL and in the field of librarianship as a whole.

It was 1982, and my husband's new job brought us to Pittsburgh. In the preceding year, I had received the doctorate in library science from Columbia; this degree, in theory, qualified me for teaching or administration. The University of Pittsburgh library school had no full-time faculty positions open that year, presenting it at a meeting of the R & S Division, presided over by Charles Cutter. R & S members were enthusiastic about the ideas for departments and suggested additional ones. Just as vividly as I recall Pearl Berger's words in the phone call mentioned above, I recall the silence that greeted my proposal for a journal recycling journal. In Judaica Librarianship, the author is assured of an interested readership, even though the general periodical may have wider circulation. Still, we know that articles relevant to our field are published both in Jewish studies and in library science periodicals. We therefore inaugurate a column in this issue entitled "Scatter of the Literature," to note such publications.

All six publishers sent me polite letters of refusal. None felt that they could be assured of enough subscriptions to justify publication of the journal.

I then took the proposal to the AJL Convention that year, presenting it at a meeting of the R & S Division, presided over by Charles Cutter. R & S members were enthusiastic about the ideas for departments and suggested additional ones. Just as vividly as I recall Pearl Berger's words in the phone call mentioned above, I recall the silence that greeted my proposal for a title of the new journal: Judaica Librarianship. No one had an alternative to suggest. The proposal went to the general membership meeting, and I was thrilled when a dues increase to cover the production costs of the journal was approved. Judaica Librarianship is the journal of both Divisions of AJL, and Phil Miller's initial appointment of Marcia Posner and myself as co-editors was designed to reflect this. Working with Marcia has been a pleasure and a privilege. Her husband describes her as "one of the nicest, most giving people I know," and he is absolutely right.

Both Marcia and I called on our network of personal contacts to build the list of contrib-