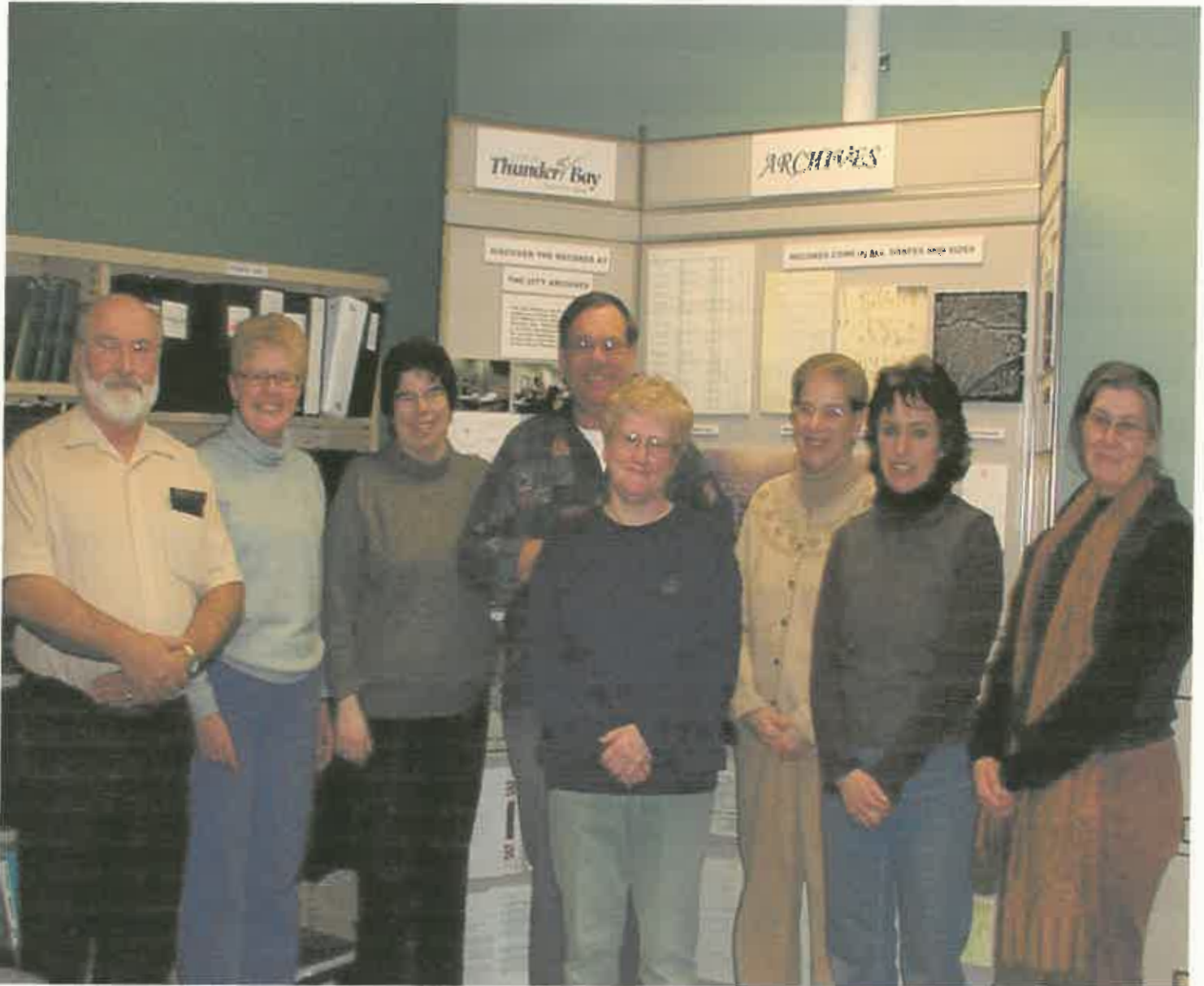


# TECH TALK



Newsletter of Thunder Bay Chapter  
Ontario Association of Library Technicians/Association des Bibliotechniciens de l'Ontario  
Vol. 33 No. 1 June 2005



**Different Places, Same Faces  
For You: Plenty of Spaces  
Join us in the Fall**

Ontario Association of Library Technicians/Association des Bibliotechniciens de l'Ontario  
Thunder Bay Regional Branch  
P.O. Box 10208  
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6T7

OALT/ABO  
 Quarterly Newsletter  
 Vol. 33 No. 1  
 JUNE 2005

Thunder Bay Chapter  
 OALT/ABO

P.O. Box 10208  
 Thunder Bay ON  
 P7B 6T7  
 Canada.

*my.tbaytel.net/dmhender*

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### 2005/06 Executive:

Valerie Welsch  
 President

H: 767-2177  
 vjwelsch@tbaytel.net

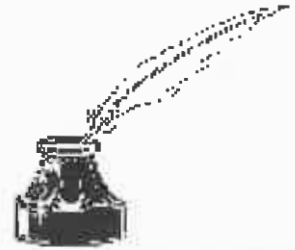
Linda Bukovy  
 Secretary  
 577-5430

Don Henderson  
 Treasurer  
 344-4029  
 dmhender@mac.com

Margot Ponder  
 Public Relations  
 767-6835

Kathy Crewdson  
 Public Relations  
 343-5768

## “ Notes a la President ”



I am hoping this newsletter finds everyone enjoying a perfect summer break.

Your new executive had the “turnaround” meeting on June 8th and roughly planned the next season’s events. Maybe because we all felt the absence of last year’s activities, we were so fired up with ideas for this year.

We hope to see you at the first meeting in September, the special guest presentation in October, wine and cheese social at my house in December, a tour in January, a workshop in February, and the final ABM dinner meeting in March.

Wanda Ewachow, who was Lakehead University’s last Library Tech grad, is the newsletter editor. Welcome to the executive Wanda. Donald Henderson is still on the executive... as treasurer. Linda Bukovy returns to the executive as secretary. Kathy Crewdson and Margot Ponder are working as a team for the public relations responsibilities. I have promised them that they do not need to lug the coffee pot to meeting so be prepared to enjoy non-caffeinated juice instead.

All flyers will also be coming to you via our Branch’s Hotmail account. If you change your email address, please get in touch with Donald... the hotmail master. And as I return as president for another time, I am hoping that I can bring some of enthusiasm for the association that I felt at conference.

Enjoy a safe and happy summer. See you in September.

Valerie Welsch



## Annual Report 2004/2005

The September meeting piggy-backed on the guest appearance of Gwynn Dyer who was speaking at Lakehead University.

On 6 February 2005 the second meeting was held at the Clabria Restaurant.

On 3 March 2005 we observed Kathy Walkinshaw's expertise on the TRIM database followed by a tour of the archives given by Alex Ross, city archivist.

Our Annual Business Meeting was a pot-luck dinner held at Kathy Crewdson's on 21 April 2005.

### Outgoing Executive

Donald Henderson

Kathy Crewdson

Valerie Welsch

Caron Naysmith

Helen Heerema

President

Treasurer

Secretary

Newsletter Editor

Public Relations

Archivist

### Incoming Executive

Valerie Welsch

Donald Henderson

Linda Bukovy

Wanda Ewachow

Margot Ponder/Kathy Crewdson

Helen Heerema

### **Financial report (as of 21 April 2005):**

Chequing: \$1505.26                      GIC: \$2209.11

### **Membership:**

14 graduates                      1 life member                      1 unemployed                      1 Institutional

Submitted by: Valerie Welsch [Updated 050613 with new information for newsletter]

## Chickens in Libraries?

A chicken walks into the library. It goes up to the circulation desk and says: "book, bok, bok, boook".

The librarian hands the chicken a book. It tucks it under his wing and runs out. A while later, the chicken runs back in, throws the first book into the return bin and goes back to the librarian saying: "book, bok, bok, bok, boook". Again the librarian gives it a book, and the chicken runs out. The librarian shakes her head.

Within a few minutes, the chicken is back, returns the book and starts all over again: "boook, book, bok bok boook". The librarian gives him yet a third book, but this time as the chicken is running out the door, she follows it.

The chicken runs down the street, through the park and down to the riverbank. There, sitting on a lily pad is a big, green frog. The chicken holds up the book and shows it to the frog, saying: "Book, bok, bok, boook". The frog blinks, and croaks: "read-it, read-it, read-it".

**"TRIM" Database**  
**Demo**  
 by  
**Linda Bukovy**

On March 3, 2005, Alex Ross, City Archivist, welcomed OALT members to a tour of the Thunder Bay Archives. To members who haven't had the opportunity to go on a tour, imagine boxes of city documents stacked high on reinforced shelving - boxes identified only with numbers and letters (a hint: it's not LC cataloguing...).

Just imagine maintaining a record management base - some way to identify documents that have either a short-term shelf life or need to be permanently kept .

Kathy Walkinshaw and her associate showed us the records management system installed in 2001 : TRIM (Total Records Information Management).

When materials are sent over for storage, records are set up for them. Options can be set up for retention schedules and record series (the program automatically keeps track of changes to the schedule). Each record has a tab that indicates where the document is currently located: Home Location (Shelf/Box), Current (Archives) and Owner (which department).

The last two sections can change if it is out on loan to a City employee.

The program keeps track of retention records; with this, reports are run to show which files to keep and which to destroy.

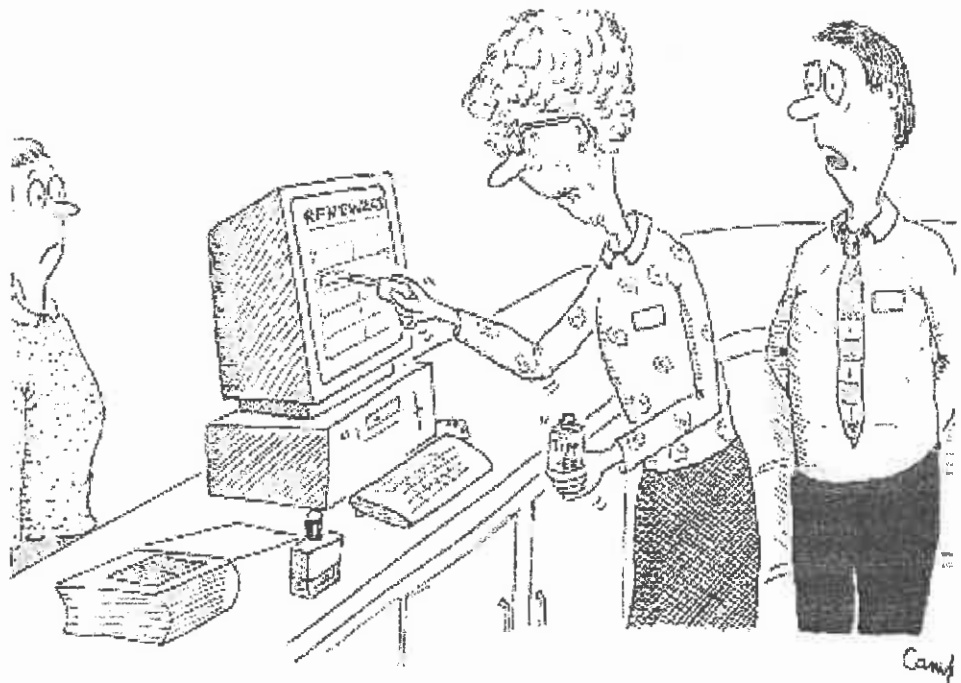
In the file record plan, there is a catalogue of possible file names to apply as search terms (think of an authority file).

As a bonus, the entire note field is searchable which is fantastic - imagine how often you're asked to look for a book - not sure of the author, not sure of the title, but the asker knows it's about a certain

topic and the cover is pink. If enough details are put in the note field, this narrows down the search.

After the record is saved, a barcode can be printed up and applied to the actual folder. This identifies the item and where it will be located. When the articles have been "catalogued" and barcoded, the location code is entered into TRIM. and a copy is sent back to the Department for its records.

Alex Ross stated he is currently looking into retrieving and storing electronic documents since many important City documents are transmitted through e-mail.



*You never got the hang of the new technology,  
 did you Miss Faversham?*

Boxes are shelved first by department, then by division. A question was asked about storing items in electronic medium and getting rid of the printed medium, but Alex Ross was hesitant about that.

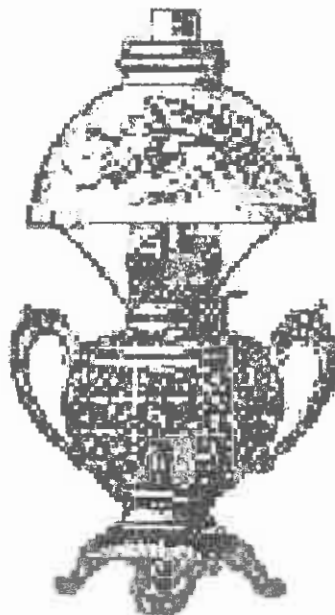
The problem is that technology is changing so quickly. Consider the saga of recorded sound - firstly wax cylinders, then long-playing records (LPs), followed by 8-track tapes, cassettes, CD-ROMs and now MP3.

As for the hardware, you'd be hard pressed to find an Edison wax cylinder player to play your great-grandfather's collection, or even to hear the 8tracks that are collecting dust in your basement. Currently the most stable of materials is paper (important documents can be printed on acid-free paper and stored in acid-free folders and boxes).

Back to the tour: the second floor houses the permanent materials that must stay in the Archives. Items are determined by the TRIM program and then brought upstairs to be stored in boxes. These are identified numerically and stored on shelves. In another room, carefully identified, are leather books containing records of the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William. The oldest ones date back to 1884.

Some of the items that are stored there are tax assessments, Henderson's directories, aerial photos, fire insurance plans and assessment roles, widely varied documents that, used together, can piece together the ownership of property. Alex discussed these documents in context showing the record of a certain parcel of land once owned by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes) is now owned by an individual who operates a bakery. A puzzle worthy of the great sleuth himself!!!

Many thanks to Kathy Walkinshaw and Alex Ross for an interesting and enlightening tour of the Thunder Bay Archives.



## OALT/ABO Annual Conference

It was my pleasure to attend the 32<sup>nd</sup> OALT/ABO Annual Conference held this year in Ottawa. There were 153 conference attendees... an increase from the last several years. Kathy Heney and her committees did a commendable job. The workshops were so varied there was always something for everyone.

I arrived at Algonquin College Residence Wednesday evening only to find the room assigned to me had been given to someone else and, since possession is nine-tenths of the law, I was given another room. The only problem was, the room I was given was with the 600 students who were in Ottawa on school tours.

They did go to bed before I did and had green masking tape on their doors at night to ensure they didn't escape for further adventures so there were no problems there. The 6:00 am wake-up call was another thing! Needless to say, I never missed breakfast and always made it to the first sessions on time.

The workshops I attended were Marian Doucette's *Blogging your Library*, Julie Gordon & Luc Cayer's *Qigong*, Mac Nason's *Witnesses to the Past: Some Techniques in Analyzing Medieval Manuscripts*, Janet Kasun's *Estate Planning - Wills and Powers of Attorney*,

Cheryl Cote's *Selecting Books for Children*, Joan Cavanagh & Monique Désormeaux's *Internet Access Issues at the Ottawa Public Library*, Stan Skrzyszewski's *Philosophers' Café*, and Dr. Dirk Keenan's *Avoid Carpal Tunnel Surgery & Bypass Back and Neck Pain*.

Since I am retiring in three years, I choose some professional workshops as well as several "interest" sessions. Some of the presenters have already downloaded their presentations on the OALT/ABO web site [www.oaltabo.on.ca/](http://www.oaltabo.on.ca/) so they are available to all of us.

On Friday night about 20 technicians went on the "Naughty Ottawa Pub Walk". A young entertainer, dress in period costume led us round the parliament grounds, through By's park, and the market giving us enjoyable gossip of Ottawa's seedy history. We did, of course, have to stop in a couple of pubs to rest our feet from all the walking and standing.

The Annual Business Meeting on Saturday afternoon went rather smoothly. Do you remember the years when a break had to be called just so heads could cool before the meeting continued?

In the round table talk after the ABM, Vicky Lynham, treasurer, stated that the membership is close to 300... on the rise. Jill Anderson stated that Lohania was thinking of folding as they can't field an executive.

The story I tell on myself involves two teenage boys in central Texas (with appropriate accents) who came to the desk asking for books on "poultry". I showed them where the 636's were with instructions to come back to the reference desk if they didn't find what they were looking for. After a few minutes, they were back and told me that they wanted books on "poultry" not chickens. I tried to find out if they wanted material on ducks or geese or what. And they kept saying they wanted books on "poultry". Finally, one of them said they were looking for books on "poultry, you know, like, love poultry". I got them some appropriate books from the 800's and they left the library happy.

They were advised to just remain as they are and become a social chapter. Things may improve for them as next year's conference will be held at Brock University (in St Catherine) May 10<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup> 2006. Jill Anderson was the winner of the Presidential Award and Susan Morley was the winner of the Award for Innovation.

Submitted by: Valerie Welsch

### Some places to explore while surfing this summer

Check out the OALT/ABO site for conference presentations:  
<http://www.oaltabo.on.ca/>

Some interesting librarian courses online:  
<http://plc.fis.utoronto.ca/default.asp>

Other interesting Canadian Library Technicians:  
<http://www.malt.mb.ca/>  
<http://www.lib.sk.ca/salt/index.html>

International support groups:  
<http://colt.ucr.edu/>  
<http://www.librarysupportstaff.com/>  
[http://www.ala.org/ala/hrdr/librarysupportstaff/Library\\_Support\\_Staff\\_Resource\\_Center.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/hrdr/librarysupportstaff/Library_Support_Staff_Resource_Center.htm)

Just for fun:  
<http://www.bellaonline.com/>  
<http://www.spaceweather.com/>

## More Book reviews by Library Technicians

Sylvia Skene

Library Technician, Advanced Education Media Acquisitions Centre  
Langara College, Vancouver, BC, Canada

In the beginning, there was excitement. Having crossed the U.S.-Canada border unharmed and avoided the customs officers so diligently searching for Little Sisters' Bookstore's naughty orders, a book for review arrived for me at my local post office. Opening any mailed parcel these days is a rare treat, enhanced in this case by new-book smell. I was ready to be seduced by my first solicited book review. Alas, it was not to be.

Denise K. Fourier and David R. Dowell have bravely attempted to write a textbook that, in their words, "introduces the novice to trends and issues affecting the current library agency." It seemed like a good niche to exploit.

They have written chapters on the impact of electronic information access, jobs and job searching, ethics in the information age, collections, circulation, reference and other library topics. They have included quotes and occasional interesting facts to engage the reader. They have compiled study questions, resources for further investigation, including web sites, and notes, at the back of each chapter, which a conscientious student might find useful.

The irony is that the very people the profession needs to recruit — techno-savvy and curious go-getters — would be totally turned off this book by page two and never read it. **Why?**

Because even with the authors' best intentions and obvious hard work, the book is in large part a print-dense overwritten humourless information dump with which to test bored students with, an all too common style in the library profession. It also seems to assume the reader — however interested she or he is in library work — has never stepped in a library and in fact knows very little about anything, as the text often states the obvious or at least the widely known.

This is perhaps just a tad harsh. But it's very frustrating to see wasted potential. Business textbooks have just as much of the same kinds of information, but are often a lot more fun to read. Why? Because they assume a minimum level of education, experience and acuity, include lively anecdotes, case histories and examples, and are written with simple, vigorous language, good humour and keen interest.

If applied properly, these techniques could also bring library history, issues and activities to life. So why aren't they? For example, ...

Where are the stories of famous thieves, or bibliographers with their obsession with wormholes and paper provenances, when talking about special collections?

Why not include an excerpt or two from challenged texts, for readers to judge for themselves, and gauge their own reactions?

Where is there some mention of prominent libraries and systems outside the U.S. to counter the often-justified accusation of American insularity and to give some sense of the wider world of libraries?

Why not have pictures and profiles of people working in libraries today: personal as well as professional backgrounds, from all walks of life and work, as examples of careers?

What about also profiling various libraries as case studies of types of libraries?

How about examples, not just "should" advice, in the job sections? Why not include some funny anecdotes, not just factoids dressed up like stories?

As for physical appearance, although the book is neatly bound and printed, there are a number of regrettably unattractive black and white pictures, poorly composed and reproduced, with multiple lines of caption where a text referral to the figure number (or no picture at all) could have done as well.

I'm sorry, folks. I really tried to like your book. It's not the worst I've tried to read in the field, and you've obviously done your homework and attempted to make it interesting, but it could have been so much better.

## **Why Farming Is Like Librarianship**

by Ross Tyner, MLS, PTF

When I "bought the farm" in 1997, many of my friends were convinced I had sniffed one too many pots of library paste.

They were incredulous that this city boy and Internet nerd would choose to live a life that involved waking up before dawn, getting my hands dirty in the garden, shovelling horse turds, picking eggs from underneath hens' arses, and other feats of manual labour, the avoidance of which explains the ten years I spent as a university student. Some of my more charitable friends eventually came around to the idea that I had chosen farming as a diversion from my otherwise dull life as a librarian. However, none of them ever suspected the true reason for my leap into agraria: farming and librarianship are as alike as two peas in a pod (or, should I say, two books on a shelf).

What follows is my attempt to rid the world of its ignorance with respect to the similarities between farming and librarianship. The list is based on my experience and observations over the past two years.

### **1. Cash Cows**

In libraries, a cash cow is a rich and morally questionable source of revenue such as

exorbitant photocopying fees or overdue fines. In farming, a cash cow is the female of the bovine species that is being fattened for sale or slaughter, e.g. "Quit scaring Caledonia, kids, she's our cash cow."

### **2. Due Dates**

In farming, the due date is the date on which a female animal (e.g. cow, ewe, sow, mare, etc.) is due to give birth, after which lactation begins and the farmer may need to milk the animal. In libraries, the due date is the date on which a book or other library item is due to be returned to the library, after which the borrower may be charged a fine and feel that he/she is being "milked" by the library (see also "cash cows").

### **3. Gophers**

In libraries, gophers were briefly popular in the early 1990s as Internet resource discovery tools, before the advent of the World Wide Web. In farming, gophers have never been popular but have often been disdained and worse.

### **4. Resource Sharing**

Librarians are known for their cooperative spirit and libraries have a long and well established history of resource sharing arrangements. These arrangements, which include

union catalogues, interlibrary loan and consortial database licenses, help libraries reduce their cost of doing business.

Likewise, farmers have for many centuries engaged in resource sharing agreements, for much the same reason as libraries. However, unlike the formal agreements of the library world, such transactions in the farming world transpire something like this:

"Hey Fred, I see you've got a nice new tractor." "Yeah, she's a beaut, eh? Cruise control, CD player, A/C..." "Well, you know I still haven't had time to fix mine since I drove her into the side of the barn." "D'you want me to come and cut your hay?" "Yeah, that would be great."

Say Fred, you wouldn't be needing some nice fresh beef now, would ya? Just got two steers back from the butcher yesterday." "Why that sounds fine. I'll be over this afternoon."

### **5. Weeding**

As every librarian knows, a healthy collection requires careful management, including frequent weeding\*\*. Successful farming, too, depends on frequent weeding. And, in both cases, weeding is often the first thing we neglect.