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scholarly projects represents a terrible shift in priorities” and “there isn’t any doubt that the academic-research community is not thrilled with the way Bill Ferris has been running the agency.” This last comment, attributed to Stanley Katz, continued: “[Ferris has] no strategic view of the humanities. He doesn’t have a vision of what the academic humanities are or where they fit.” Overall, the gist of the criticism and concern was that Ferris’s shift of priorities to folklore involved a clear move from the more traditional humanities programs the endowment had been established to foster and support. The council’s decision to reduce and eventually cut off support for major editions, notwithstanding the fact that they are prized for their use in research and as monuments to America’s genius, is an incontrovertible sign of what Ferris is up to.

Criticism of Ferris’s plan mounted to a sufficient level to raise some second thoughts at NEH. On 25 September John Roberts, deputy chairman, issued a letter outlining the proposed policy and inviting comment. Roberts gave interested parties until 16 October (twenty-one days) to respond. This would give the President’s Council, assembling in November (presumably to adopt the proposed policy), the benefit of responses arriving by the sixteenth. Twenty-one days was not much time to inform friends of the editions of the present danger, but somehow word got out, and a surprising number of strong,

well-argued letters ended up on the desks of Roberts and Ferris. The weight of concern increased on 21 October when the *New York Times* published a lead editorial titled “Scholarly Editions in Jeopardy.” The *Times* editorial concluded with this paragraph:

Nothing the N.E.H. can do is more central to its mission than fostering the kind of research and historical enlightenment these editions provide. They preserve and make public this country’s intellectual, political and cultural monuments. The irony is that by trying to kill off funding as an expression of conservative ire, Congress and the endowment’s critics have made the task of preserving, editing and disseminating “the best that is known and thought in the world” nearly impossible. It is time to put these editions on a solid footing, to give them the encouragement they so clearly deserve.

When the President’s Council met on 17 November, the council members took account of the criticisms of Ferris’s plan. The council seemed more reluctant to abandon or severely cut back the editions, and concluded its discussion by adopting a proposal to create a separate scholarly editions budget and to construct new guidelines for editions. The guidelines are still expected to strongly favor projects that can be completed within a limited time frame, but they will probably be less restrictive than the earlier six-year plan. The council plans to take up this matter again in March.

Now with a new Republican administration at the nation’s helm, it is unclear what is in store for Ferris and for his revisioning of NEH. Ferris will probably at least complete his tenure, which runs for one more year, but it seems likely he will not be looked on too favorably by the more conservative members of the Bush administration. Friends of the editions should be on their guard and should use whatever influence they have to advocate for the continuation and strengthening of the scholarly editions program. To find out who is on the council, access this Web site: <http://www.neh.gov/howeare/council.html>. See if you know any of the council members and if you do, let them know what the Peirce Edition Project means to you and to United States and world culture.

*Nathan Houser
Director and General Editor*

THE CAROLYN EISELE COLLECTION

On 15 January 2000, Carolyn Eisele passed away in her Manhattan apartment at the age of 98. The real tragedy, however, occurred much earlier, in 1992, when a severe stroke greatly incapacitated her. She spent the last eight years of her life in bed in her small apartment surrounded by her books and papers, almost entirely unable to communicate, and under the constant care of a professional nurse.

The stiff Manhattan rents forced a quick evacuation of the apartment. So, at the request of the executor of her estate, Arthur Kaufman, Nathan Houser and I left for New York City to collect her library and papers, which had been given to the Peirce Edition Project.

Carolyn Eisele lived in a one-bedroom apartment on the 27th floor of an apartment building in midtown Manhattan. What the apartment lacked in size was amply compensated for by its location and its most magnificent view of the Manhattan skyline, especially at night. The apartment was literally filled with books and papers. She must never have thrown anything away. Books and journals were found everywhere, as were the remnants of her extensive travels, and the hall closets were filled more than knee-high with shopping bags stuffed with correspondence. Her complete financial records, including all check stubs, tax returns, phone bills, etc. had also been preserved. Even the kitchen did not escape, as there was an old shopping cart filled with mathematics books blocking one of its two entryways. With the help of Ralph Müller from Fordham University and five of his students, we carried away well over a hundred boxes, quite a few of which had already been packed eight years earlier to make room for a hospital bed.

In cooperation with IUPUI’s Public History Program and with support from the Max Fisch Library Fund, a student of Archival Studies is currently sorting her way through the material we brought back. Eisele’s library is now being catalogued, and her books broaden our existing research collection in an important way, as they are mostly on mathematics and on the history of science. They are

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