using the HTLV-III/LAV designation, but they do not completely rule out the possibility of ultimately switching to HIV. "It's not that I hate the name," Gallo says. "If it is accepted widely I would gravitate toward it." Essex expressed a similar sentiment.

Whether the new name will achieve widespread acceptance is unclear. The original letter from the nomenclature committee asked "that the editors of all journals that print this letter insist that published papers conform to these rules." *Science*, for one, has not accepted this condition and deleted the request from the published letter. Even Varmus concedes, "We're not a policing outfit. We can only strongly recommend that researchers use the name and that journals ask their authors to use it." ■ JEAN L. MARX

Library Cutbacks: An Information Deficit

After a severe budget cut this year, the Library of Congress fired staff, reduced cataloging, closed at night, and cast an envious eye at the Pentagon

THIS has not been a good season for the Library of Congress. Its budget was slashed in a double assault in February, once in a congressional gesture of self-sacrifice (3.5%), and then again in accordance with the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law (4.3%).

For the first time this century, the library has shut its doors most nights and on Sundays. A protest sprang up in March, and police chased members of a new group called "Books not Bombs" around the stately reading room. Meanwhile, the staff is falling behind in cataloging new material. Services to the blind and handicapped are frozen below the 1985 funding level. Scores of employees have been dismissed.

In addition, as luck would have it, the library's experimental book preservation plant caught fire twice in the last few months, and was all but destroyed in February. Then in April came the final insult: the drinking fountains went bad. Signs in the sleek new Madison building warn, "Water from these fountains is not potable." The plumbing—as well as the Pieirian spring—seems to have broken down.

Understandably, chief librarian Daniel Boorstin began to speak in apocalyptic terms. It was a bit unusual, coming from an appointee of the Republican Ford Administration (1975). He delivered a Jeremiad at the House appropriations hearing in February, and it still echoes around Capitol Hill.

"Historians . . . will recall the last epoch of the Roman Empire when Romans were so fearful of the barbarians that they imitated the barbarians," Boorstin said. He pointed to the disparity between Congress's support of the military, amounting to $300 billion a year, and its unwillingness to give the library $18.3 million it wants to add to its $220-million budget. "These are not the priorities of civilization and freedom," he chided. He called the cutbacks this year "antidemocratic and antiknowledge," in that they would make it harder for working people to use the library.

Boorstin argued that "knowledge is not simply another commodity," despite the fad for calling libraries information resource centers. Money spent on knowledge is not like other elements of the gross national product, he said, because "knowledge is never used up; it increases by diffusion." He begged the subcommittee to restore the cuts of 1986 in next year's budget in order to keep pace with the library's demands for collecting and cataloging new items. Otherwise, Boorstin said, 1986 would mark the beginning of the "disintegration of this great institution."

The blast hit home, with results Boorstin may not have expected. Coming at the same time as a 30% cut in reading room hours, it prompted a sharp public response. The most dramatic protest was the on-again off-again skirmish with the police in the library's main reading room that occurred sporadically over several weeks. Former Democratic presidential candidates Jesse Jackson and Eugene McCarthy showed up. McCarthy said the situation was deplorable, but not surprising. He added that the Lenin library in Moscow keeps longer hours (as do many libraries), and gibed that the government is more interested in sending propaganda to Cuba than granting access to the library.

For a while, demonstrators trooped in at closing time, refused to budge, and got arrested. But it is expensive to be arrested, and it costs the library something to make arrests. An appeal from the staff stressed this point, warning that continuing demonstrations would put off the day when the library could reopen at night. After a few weeks, the furor subsided.

A parallel skirmish took place in newspaper columns. Most writers, including three *Washington Post* columnists, took Boorstin's side. One *New Yorker* author, Susan Sheehan, praised the library as her office away from home. A local book author, Joseph Goulden, responded sourly to these encomiums, saying he could never find the books he wanted on the shelf. He scolded Sheehan for wasting his tax money and berated fellow scribblers for their "whines."

Congress has endorsed Boorstin's cause, in word if not yet in deed. Representative Vic Fazio (D–CA), chairman of the relevant appropriations committee in the House, and committee member Lindy Boggs (D–LA) told Boorstin they were delighted that he had launched a spirited campaign. Others agreed, filling the *Congressional Record* on 9 April—the middle of National Library Week—with supportive speeches. One skeptic raised a question, however.

Representative William Frenzel (IR–MN) interrupted the library fest to ask whether Boorstin could not have found a way to cut the budget with less pain. After all, hours were reduced 30%, while the Gramm-Rudman law required a reduction of only 4.3%. "Whenever we reduce defense spending a little bit, the Secretary comes in and says that he will have to ground the Air Force and dock the Navy and fire the Army," said Frenzel. "I got the impression that that is what the librarian of Congress was doing." One congressional aide put it as follows: "The question is whether Boorstin's gamble will pay off. Will he irritate people into giving more money, or less?"

Boorstin declines to talk about this until his next appearance in Congress on 7 May. He did write to Frenzel, however, pointing out that the reduction in hours provided only about one-twentieth of the savings needed to meet the Gramm-Rudman requirements. These cuts seem to have been spread fairly evenly over the library's divi-

sions. Spokeswoman Nancy Bush says the reduction in hours will save $500,000 from March to October. It is a stalling tactic, the kind being used at agencies all around Washington. Everyone is waiting for the 1987 budget picture to clarify, which will not happen until late summer.

Meanwhile, 300 people are to be purged from the library's staff of 5200 this year, some by attrition, some by direct dismissal. This does no good for morale. "There is so much uncertainty about the future, it's at least as crippling as what has already happened," says a manager of reader services. "You're losing respected colleagues on the one hand, and not knowing when your number's going to come up on the other." With less staff, the work has increased. The library's overall budget is about the same as in 1983, although the number of users has grown by 800,000.

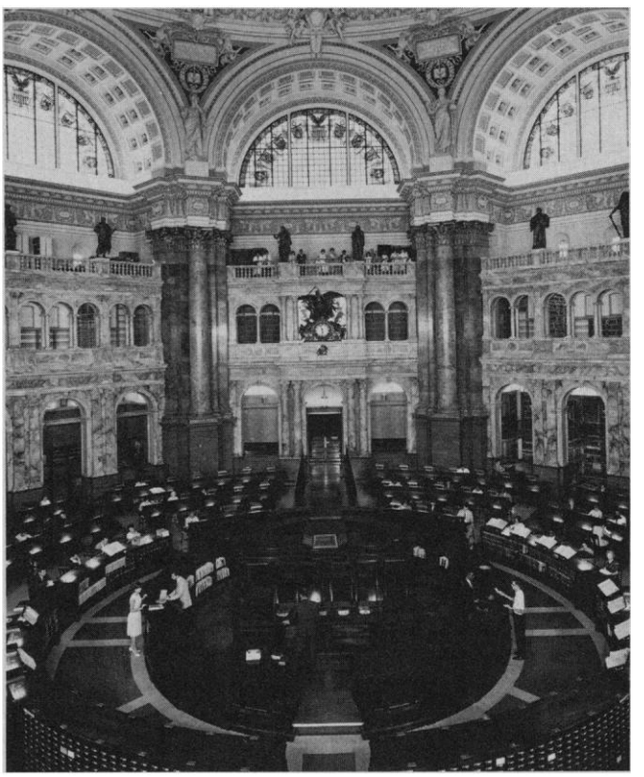
The program for the blind and handicapped has lost $4 million in purchasing power, says director Frank Cylke. Production of books on cassette has been cut by 80,000 copies. The subscription list for magazines in braille has been frozen. Research and development have been reduced. (This is the agency that developed the long-playing 33-rpm record.) "The impact this year is obviously serious," says Cylke, "but it will be felt even more 3 years from now."

Delays in cataloging will create a backlog of 25,000 books, according to the library. This will ripple through the system, affecting all subscribers to the library's card catalog service.

The acquisitions and preservation budgets dropped 13% and 16%, respectively. Robert Sullivan, director of acquisitions, reports, "We are drastically reducing the purchase of all nonbook materials," particularly recordings.

The library has delayed but not drastically changed plans to invest in some pricey new machinery. For example, it put off until next year the purchase of a mainframe computer (costing $2.3 million). In 1980, the card catalog was computerized and all new entries are made electronically. The system is gradually becoming more dependent on computers. At present, according to the assistant director of this office, William Nugent, the system's response time is "adequate," but declining. If new terminals and a computer cannot be bought, the system will begin to bog down, with "disastrous" results.

Since 1982, the library has been working on a new system that uses lasers and optical disks to store images of books, periodicals, pictures, and musical performances. Spokesman for the project, Joseph Price, chief of the science and technology division, says that approximately $2 million has been spent so far, not counting staff time. The first phase comes to a close this year. Unless Congress can be persuaded to fund it on a larger scale, it will languish.



Before the storm

In a calmer era, serenity reigned. But in March, the Library of Congress cut its hours 30%, leading to protests and arrests in the general reading room.

The library has developed a laser device that scans both sides of a page instantaneously and stores the image in digital form on an optical disk. Another "juke box" device created for the library can search out and retrieve in a matter of seconds any item on the 100 disks it holds. Each disk can store 10,000 to 15,000 pages. At present, there is no cost advantage over microfilming, but Price says that optical disks may become cheaper, and they already have some other advantages.

Digital data, unlike microfilm, can be reproduced with almost no loss in quality. The data can be transmitted electronically to distant sites. And because information in this form is so easy to duplicate, more people will be able to get access to it. The ease of duplication makes for problems as well, for it will be difficult to protect copyrighted materials.

To help Congress see the virtues of the disk system this spring, the library will have laser-recorded images of the *Congressional Record* indexed and available on terminals on Capitol Hill within 24 hours of publication.

Another big technological investment, fully funded in 1984 and unhurt by the Gramm-Rudman cuts, is a book deacidification experiment. Until recently, the pilot project was being run by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. A small fire in December and an explosion in the chemical process lines in February set back the schedule. Then, in disassembling the equipment, researchers burned the lab, making the facility inoperable. The chief preservation official, Peter Sparks, says the library is planning to reorganize the effort, and in future will rely less on aerospace engineers and more on chemical process experts. He had planned for regular operations to begin in 1988, but now they cannot be launched before 1989 at the earliest. Meanwhile, books with acidic paper—including most of those printed in this century—are deteriorating beyond rescue at a rate of about 70,000 a year.

But not all federal agencies are sweating like this. As officials at the Library of Congress struggle to make ends meet this spring, they may cast an envious glance across the river at the Pentagon. On 3 March, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger wrote to Congress that he had not been able to spend all the money he received last year. In a note that recently came to light, Weinberger said that his department began the year with $2.2 billion in its pockets, "in excess of the amount needed to carry out the programs for which the funds were appropriated." That excess is nine times the size of the Library of Congress's budget. ■

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