



MACS Times

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The Newsletter of the Middle Atlantic College Stores, Inc. serving Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia since 1970.

WHERE IS THE NEAREST DISCOTHEQUE?

Forty years ago, some of you were not involved in the college bookstore industry. It's safe to say that many of us were only a sparkle in our parent's eyes. Forty years ago I was just a young Mennonite kid, waitressing weekends in a Pennsylvania Dutch restaurant in bucolic Lancaster farm country. I will never forget the stylish young couple who asked me "Where is the nearest discotheque". The *nearest* discotheque! I didn't know *what* a discotheque was much less where one would find one. But things have changed in the past 40 years and folks don't look for discotheques in Amish country anymore.



Forty years ago, the floppy disk was invented. In 1971, the VCR and the dot-matrix printer were rolled out. Disposable lighters appeared in 1973 and post-it notes were only invented in 1974! In 1970 the average income was \$9,350 and a gallon of gas was .36 cents. The first electronic spreadsheet, called VisiCalc didn't make its debut until the late 70's.

Our freshman class of 2014 was born in 1992. They don't know how to write cursive and they think that e-mail is way too slow. Toothpaste tubes have always stood up on their caps and rock bands have always played at presidential inaugural parties.

By Shirley Landis
President Elect

They are armed with iPhones and BlackBerries and making a phone call is only one of the many, many functions they can perform. They are inundated with technology that does not distinguish between facts and information. They are a generation accustomed to instant access.

Change is indeed accelerating –we see this every day in our work. The changes in our industry are having a powerful effect on the way we run our bookstores. How do we keep up with and manage this revolution in our jobs? Understanding these changes and being able to transform our services and our products to our customers is critical to our survival.

Most of us are anxious about change. My boss wants to see change; the staff is upset by change. I don't really like it either, but I know that change is necessary to stay relevant. As store managers, we need to equip our staff to deal with these changes. Nothing is as important to the survival of our bookstores as the ability to change. We can evolve or we can go extinct.

We all have many questions in regards to what's happening in the textbook world. Must I be in textbook rentals to stay viable? Where is digital delivery going? How do I make up the revenue loss from textbooks? What else can I sell? What are my peers doing? Who has the great ideas? What's hot? How can I make money for the university, keep my job and still serve my students with excellent customer service?

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