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BULLETIN of THE RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOL. 44 - No. 4

November, 1971

A FEW GAS BUBBLES FROM AN OVER-AGED LIBRARIAN CANNED IN A MASON JAR OF TRADITION

by
H. Glenn Brown

LIBRARY TRIES TO PROVE IT'S DIFFERENT NOW
"Libraries aren't what they used to be" is what the leaflet says, and what the Fox Point branch library tried to prove yesterday. The library sponsored a five hour program ranging from rock music to puppet shows to make the point that a library is part of a community's life, and not just a lot of bookshelves and "be quiet!" signs.

That is not a gas bubble.
That is a quotation from the
EVENING BULLETIN, May
24, 1971, City Edition, p. 31.

Well, maybe there is a bit of gas in that headline, but now hold your nose while we carefully unscrew the lid of the Mason jar. What innocent can think that a lot of bookshelves, provided they are well stock-

ed, and a few "Silence" signs cannot be a part of a community's life? The branch of the Providence Public Library which this reader now uses would be considerably improved by prolonged periods of quiet; now it is a good place for adults to leave their children and to take books away from. It's almost impossible to carry on a legitimate con-

THE RILA BULLETIN

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There are no items for the
Career Opportunities column.

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upon request.

versation with the librarians,
who surely must have to retire
to the boiler room now and
then to smoke or drink to
keep their marvelous disposit-
ions.

What is a library? Is it a
play school? a day-care
center? a theater? an art
school? a dance school? Is
it kindergarten, grade and
high school, junior college,
senior college, evening
school, and trade school?
And are librarians school
teachers? or nurses? or direc-
tors? or ALL THINGS TO
EVERYBODY?

(That's a big bubble. And all
that listing doesn't smell any
worse than the laboreous
method of demonstrating "out-
reach" imported from the
Regional Action Workshop at
Springfield. Hey nonnie no
--- what games we play!
And how long they take. Is
outreach so difficult a con-
cept?)

What is a library?

It's an institution for fun and
games and outreach. In the
U.S.A., libraries have been

reaching out even before Carnegie. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin, with others, preached and practiced outreach through libraries not long after Philadelphia became a community. That outreach still persists, not new, but changed, and it will continue as long as society is imperfect and libraries are effective. Perhaps the questions librarians must ask themselves about outreach are still the same: Whom are you trying to reach? and How?

It is good to see the children at home in the Rochambeau branch. It is good to see the patience, affection and assistance given to them by the staff, and to see that some of the children honor that guidance and love. It would be better if with the love and assistance there came also a reasonable discipline, and an instilling of respect, not just for the staff and the adults in the library but also for the institution itself. (Terrible gas bubble, that). Love withers without discipline and dies from lack of respect.

In Rhode Island, outreach

might add to its map Clayville and Scituate and all the believers in the word of God and the U.S. Constitution as represented by the Reverend Ennio Cugini of the Clayville Congregational Church. If the general tone of the reaction to his address at the spring conference was correctly sensed by this listener, such believers are a small and almost silent minority in RILA. The Reverend believes in the Bible and the Constitution, and consequently he knows that blasphemy, obscenity, pornography and treason are evil, and he does have an audience and a following. This reader is not among them, but couldn't the members of RILA suffer Mr. Cugini with a little more intellectual curiosity and a little less undisguised antipathy? Or is that an outmoded tradition? Is audience heckling the new tradition? Was the reverend set up for that amusement? That is unbelievable. Nevertheless, one still, small, private voice kept insisting on keeping emotions cool.

For here is a conflict of outreach and censorship. How

effective is it just to wave a court decision like a big stick? Censorship and licentiousness are related enemies of civilization. Our predicament and our frustration is that while we fight one the other rides our backs. If we want to apply a big stick, we ought to apply it to both, making sure we recognize the enemy.

What is a library besides school and drop-in center and a "lot of bookshelves and 'be quiet' signs"? It is nothing -- a no-no thing -- without a selection of communication materials on its shelves, and it is that selection that gives it reach and power, and that brings censorship. For very good reasons our libraries select controversial materials but refuse to buy or store shoddy materials. (Right on! oh gas, make a stink. Shoddy materials? Like W. E. B. DuBois and James Baldwin? or tapes of the reverend Mr. Cugini's broadcasts? or copies of the films shown at our Providence "adult film centers"?) How does one avoid the shoddy? By what standards is the selection made? By the collective judgement

of CHOICE? by the Ten Commandments and the U. S. Constitution? by the strident self-righteousness of the Intellectual Freedom Committee? by whatever taste and intelligence the selectors have, or by a statistical construction of the public taste of the era? And by whatever standards, what does the budget select? Since selection is both necessary and desirable and censorship is evil and undesirable, we all must learn to distinguish one from the other and act accordingly.

(Because I know that there are dirty books, dirty movies, and dirty pictures; I am a dirty old man. That seemed to be the point of the skit presented at the luncheon for the Spring Conference. I believe that the profession would have been better served if the participants had spent their time picketing the "adult film center.")

Perhaps with all the media available today for use in the home, libraries are outmoded, traditional institutions and probably should all be turned into schools. Less

drastically, perhaps they should be reduced to minimum service stations, like our railway stations, so that one could get a book at his particular station but when he needed information he simply dialed the Library of Congress for it:

"Is the Marble Palace in Newport open in December, and if so, what are the hours?"

Then of course, he can expect an interim reply:

"What marble palace and which Newport are you inquiring about? We are in Washington, D. C. "

What is a library?

Drain off the rest of the fermenting juice and bury what's left in the jar.

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Mr. Brown is a retired Brown University reference librarian who responded to the Bulletin and its monthly request for material expressing your opinion on any library oriented subject.

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FROM PROVIDENCE SYSTEMS OFFICE:

Sheps & Ridley, eds.
Public Health & Population
Change in Pitts. 1965.

HQ accession #:
766 78367
S9 Nov. 13, 1967
1964

Returned to Providence Systems Office. It is not PPL's, Brown U's, RIC's, or URI's & has been circulated to the Regional centers without being claimed. Also tried Medical Society Library.

Does anyone recognize it as theirs?
????????????????????

EXECUTIVE BOARD NEWS:

The RILA Executive Board met at the Providence Public Library on October 12, from 10 - 1. Members present were: Mr. Alexander, Mrs. Sally Wilson, Mrs. Barbara Wilson, Mr. Crosby, Mr. Olsen and guests: Mr. Eliot Andrews, Mr. Denomme, Mrs. Agonis and Mrs. Crowley.

The agenda for the Fall business meeting was set up, with the main item of business being the passing of the By-Laws changes.

The program of the Government Relations committee was discussed and a motion was passed asking "the Government Relations committee to draft a proposal for the Executive Board of a comprehensive program of legislative objectives for consideration of RILA."

Mrs. Hanna Agonis presented proposed guidelines for the selection of scholarship recipients. They were discussed and sent back to her committee for further work.

The Membership committee chairman, Mrs. Elin Crowley, reported on attempts to interest URI Graduate Library School students in RILA. She also has made some contacts with the School Library people.

The November Executive Board meeting will be held November 16 at Rhode Island College.

NEW ENGLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Meeting and Conference at
Wentworth-By-The-Sea

At the dinner and first general session of the 1971 annual conference of the New England Library Association, the following officers were announced:

President: Mr. F. Charles Taylor, Librarian, Providence Public Library, Providence, R.I.

Vice President and President Elect: Mrs. Mary A. McKenzie, Librarian, Connecticut College Palmer Library, New London, Conn.

NELA

Treasurer: Mr. Joseph S.

Komidar, Director of Libraries, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.

Secretary: Jeanne Menard, Librarian, South Burlington Middle School, South Burlington, Vermont.

Director I: Alice M. Cahill, Assistant Director, Massachusetts Bureau of Library Extension, Boston, Mass.

Director II: Mrs. Marianna H. Rowe, Head of Children's Services, Portland Public Library, Portland, Maine.

Keith Doms, President of the American Library Association and Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia was the feature speaker. The title of his talk was "An Inner City Twosome."

Other speakers scheduled for the meeting were Goodman Ace, author and humorist; Alex Haley, author of Malcolm X and Beyond this Anger; a children's book clinic with 3 children's book authors; and an audio-visual services program.

SWAP CORNER:

Manual of the First Congregational Church, Bristol, R.I. 1687 - 1872. compiled by J. P. Lane, pastor. Providence: Providence Press Co., 1873. (back spine is peeling, easily reattached -- otherwise in excellent condition.)

contact

J. Toy, Reference, Providence Public Library.

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

A librarian was asked for the definition of "cratch" as it wasn't in his dictionary. The definition as "a crib to hold fodder" was greeted by "whose father" by the bewildered patron.

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

RILA COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mrs. Kenneth B. Roberts of Cranston has tendered her resignation from the Trustee Committee because of family reasons. As a replacement, Mrs. Velma M. Brown, 76 Carlton Ave., Warwick, has accepted an invitation to join the committee. She is chairman of the Board at Warwick Public Library.

MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOC.

The fourteenth annual meeting of the New England Regional Group of the Medical Library Association was held in New Haven, September 24-25, 1971 at the invitation of Yale Medical School.

The interesting program included addresses on library services for nursing, regional medical library service, a demonstration of MEDLINE and AIM/TWX for bibliographic retrieval, a symposium on communication media in a health science library, a film "William Harvey and the Discovery of the Circulation of the Blood," and a symposium on medical library acquisition problems. The latter, given by representatives from a book company, a magazine agency, and a bindery, would have applied to any type of library and presented a disturbing picture of economic conditions in the library supplies business.

We were especially fortunate in having Doctor Derek Price, Avalon Professor of the History of Science, as our dinner speaker. His address, "Quant-

ity, Quality, and Function in Biomedical Information" was so challenging that a long discussion followed. Again, the talk could have applied to any type of academic publishing.

The scene of the fifteenth annual meeting, 1972, will be Providence. Mrs. Josephine Carson has invited the Group to meet at the new Sciences Library at Brown University.

R.I. SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION:

There was a remarkable turnout for the dinner meeting of the R.I.S.L.A. held September 3, 1971, at the Duncan Pfyffe Restaurant in Cranston. The speaker, Mrs. Florence Simister, geared her talk on Experiences in Researching for Streets of the City to her audience of school librarians.

The slate of officers for the coming year is:

Pres.: Mrs. Lenore Imondi

V.P.: Mrs. Evelyn Hayes

Sec.: Mr. Chester Ham

Corresp. Sec.: Mrs. Bernice Brassard

Treas.: Miss Mary O'Connor

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(A subsidiary)
Oklahoma City, Okla. 73118
4600 North Cooper

NEW BOOKS INSPECTION CENTERS:

Los Angeles, Calif. 90036, 5820 Wilshire Blvd.

Houston, Tex. 77019, 1701 West Gray Street

Boston, Mass. (vicinity), 372 Main Street, Watertown, Mass. 02172



NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

SOUTH COUNTY:

First in the series of Humanities Programs will be held in Westerly, December 1, at the High School auditorium at 7:30. The speaker will be Dr. A. E. Van Nostrand who will present a slide discussion program entitled "Exiles in the House", a discussion of the generation gap and the counterculture.

Westerly Library Art Gallery's November show will feature local crafts including weaving, quilting, and macrame.

Miss Elizabeth Myer will be speaking at the Graduate Library School colloquium on Nov. 15, at 8 p.m. in the University of Rhode Island Student Union.

The Graduate Library School will be offering a new library science course in the spring which will be entitled Library Co-operation pending University approval.

Mrs. Kay Hearn announces: In conjunction with National Book Week, Harold Book Store in Wakefield will provide mult-

iple copies of current titles on ecology to three So. Kingston libraries: Peace Dale, Kingston, and the Beverly Hale Library in Matunick.

WESTERN:

Joseph T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., Cranston Branch Librarian at Knightsville, formerly of the PPL periodical department, is now Coordinator of Libraries for the Town of Coventry and can be reached at the Anthony Library (Tel. 821-5654)

Mrs. Frieda Pochapin, formerly of the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, has joined the professional staff of the Warwick Public Library to serve as an acquisitions and reference librarian.

Mrs. Ursula Clapp of the Apponaug Free Library resigned last summer, and Mrs. Mary Cramer, an assistant at the library, is now in charge.

Mrs. Barbara Haworth, formerly assistant at the Knightsville Branch of the Cranston Public Library, is now in charge.

NORTHERN:

Beginning October 1, Lincoln Public Library opened its doors on Sunday afternoons.

On September 19, the Northern System began a weekly radio program, Sunday nights on WXTR, 550 on your dial, at 8:05 p.m.

The Cumberland library board elected Remus F. Caroselli Chairman.

Wallace Mason has been appointed Librarian in Johnston. He has served as a trustee of the Valley Falls Library in Cumberland and is currently a member of the new Cumberland library board.

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RILA's file of The Bulletin is incomplete.

Please send any old copies you may have in excess to the editor.

PROVIDENCE:

Jane Corddry has been appointed a clerk in the Systems Office in charge of film bookings and ILL reserves.



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